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### BIOGRAPHY

#### DEWEY GANZEL

*Fortune and Men's Eyes: The Career of John Payne Collier*  
453pp, Oxford University Press, £15.  
019 212231 2

John Payne Collier, the scholar-forgery, was one of the most eminent Shakespearean editors of the nineteenth century, in the period between the death of Edmund Malone in 1813 and the rise of the "new bibliography". Perhaps, if one includes the traditionally contiguous fields of Tudor and Stuart drama, poetry and popular literature, he was the most eminent of them all. His life spanned ninety-four years (1789-1883), and he wrote, or edited, or contributed to some ninety-five separately printed works, many of which are still of great service. His industry alone made him legendary in his time, but his output is remarkable also for the quality of its basic intentions and the wealth of new matter and good judgment in its commentary. As a publicist of the Shakespearean past he added formidably both to the refinement of scholarship and to the spread of its appeal, to the extent that in his mid-career even the popular press (of which he was bred a representative) covered such matters in astonishing detail. He was a minor poet, a friend of Lamb, Hazlitt, Crab Robinson, Wordsworth and Coleridge, an underpaid journalist most of his life, an unfiring administrator of the antiquarian publications societies of the 1830s onward, a library adviser and an agent of collectors; but never was he honoured and caressed as he had hoped, or rewarded enough by privilege and pension to enjoy growing old. His accumulated authority made him respected and feared, even hated, but never rich or "established", and he wound up a long life in comparative obscurity, bitter about it and about himself. He had deserved better at the beginning; he did not wholly deserve what became of him.

Collier's positive achievements were first the rediscovery or re-evaluation of understated writers and books, and the propagation of relatively sound modern versions of dozens of inaccessible texts; second, the assembly of bibliographical and descriptive data for hundreds of other works, printed and manuscript, and for them again, the presentation of his findings in a popular form; and third, critical and editorial work on Shakespeare, Spenser, early English ballads, poetry and entertainments — like the Punch and Judy tradition, which he was the first to explore — in many instances superior to that of any of his contemporaries.

What set Collier apart from his contemporaries, however, was not wholly his merit, and what diminishes — or even vitiates — many of his achievements is not simply the passage of time. Collier was a phenomenally active forger of literary evidence, mainly to support his own independent conjectures, and as such the most remarkable and most dangerous of modern times. He is often called "impudent" or "shameless", as if his forgery were a matter of arrogance, so presumptuous and contemptible as only to be deplored and dismissed. But the impositions he perpetrated are anything but trivial, and so pervasive are they that even today they affect our reading and our understanding of the period he championed. This may be hard to believe, but Dewey Ganzel's biography has come along to make perfectly clear, by unconscious example, just how insidious Collier's fabrications can still be.

The fabrications are many and scattered, either in actual manuscript or — more devastating — in printed supposed report, based on nothing we now know. They apparently include corruption, by forged insertion, of the great theatrical records at Dulwich College (Henslowe's Diary), of the registers of the Stationers' Company (a prime source for all research into early printed books), of theatrical and other ballads (ballads often all his own invention), of the accepted text of Shakespeare, Spenser and Coleridge, and of the national authorship, auspices, or venue of several plays and other books by faked "contemporary" ascriptions. The most prominent, most outrageous (but not in practice the most deceptive) of Collier's projects occupied much of his own later life, and continues to preoccupy the biographer: a scrappy copy of the Second Folio of Shakespeare's plays (1632), now known as the Perkins Folio from the signature — forged or not — of a Tho. Perkins across its cover, which was prepared with a great abundance of marginal corrections in handwriting designed, deliberately, to be taken as seventeenth-century. Perkins or his predecessor, the

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## A new victim for the Old Corrector

Arthur Freeman

annotator, was named "the Old Corrector" by Collier, and the name has stuck. Collier himself "discovered" and himself owned this artefact until he gave it away (or sold it) to the Duke of Devonshire in 1853, and upon it he based one full-length book and in large part two lavish editions of Shakespeare's Works. The Perkins emendations and their closely kept proprietorship occasioned tremendous scholarly furor, an acrimonious reaction and counter-reaction in print and in literary society, and eventually the disgrace of Collier, who survived the beginning of the episode by forty years. The Folio itself is certainly one of the most spectacular of modern forgeries: for it is just that from cover to cover — a mid-nineteenth-century hoax — and it engaged a generation of scholars in highly unprofitable wrangling. It set Collier's enemies to seek other examples of his tampering, and it led others to waste years in his defence. Most of Collier's other fabrications have been shadowed by this one, but the question for the biographer goes deeper and earlier: what makes a man do this sort of thing? And what is life like when you do it and are caught?

Collier has very much deserved a biography more elaborate than that by G. F. Warner in the *DNB*, or the good chapters by S. Schoenbaum in *Shakespeare's Lives* (1970). Indeed, prior accounts of him have been largely devoted to totting up his offences; some understanding of "why a man of Collier's obvious ability and achievements would have committed forgery" (as Ganzel proposed, before changing his thrust) would be interesting to have. But having addressed himself to this problem, which is the central one for any such biography, this biographer immediately abandons it, and simply abandons it for one startling reason: Collier, he maintains, is innocent of all charges of forgery, and guileless of virtually everything but credulity and having enemies. That thesis dominates Ganzel's book; indeed, his book is little other than a sustained exposition of it, with data chosen in illustration of it, and characterizations and accounts of events dependent upon it. "A detective story", he calls it; but it is one in which the evidence is fitted to the solution, and where testimony which only Collier's real guilt would illuminate is degraded or suppressed. Ganzel implements his hypothesis

with a great deal of special pleading, especially about motivation ("If Collier had wanted... why would he have...?" etc) and the effects of rivalry, as well as exhaustive if sometimes misrepresentative précis of the querulous pamphleteering which surrounds more than one of Collier's enterprises. The latter give a persuasive impression of a hostile climate, one in which Collier might be unfairly convicted, but to the task of exonerating him (for the cumulative verdict has never really been questioned, even by Collier) Ganzel brings only a very selective body of evidence. That this evidence has impressed several early reviewers of this biography is not altogether surprising, for Ganzel gives no hint of the weight or breadth of the case against Collier, and almost no account of the physical evidence which remains to condemn him. Concentrating on the Perkins Folio (nearly half the book is devoted to it) he skips the other charges so much as to suggest, for a reader who doesn't know otherwise, that they are gratuitous additions to the one great slander, few and inconsequential. In fact they are many, major and if anything more pernicious than the script of the Perkins Folio, for the latter has long been discounted, whereas the others still lay serious traps for modern scholars.

But the Folio is the star of the book, and Ganzel gives over 200 pages to a close account of Collier's alleged discovery of it, his publication of the notes, the controversy over their "ownership", their authenticity and the subsequent career of the volume. Only ten pages, however, are devoted to a firsthand physical description of the book, and half of them are geared to accusations of further tampering, against the staff of the British Museum, which I simply haven't space to refute. What pages 339-44 say is really the sum total of Ganzel's arguments about the Folio itself (as opposed to the uproar) and these must be considered in detail, because his whole thesis is pitched upon them.

While accepting, as we all have, that the marginalia are in a modern hand, Ganzel relies on three items of evidence, two of them hard, to "prove" that John Payne Collier himself could not have been the forger. One is the testimony of two men who may have seen the book before Collier owned it. Their "unrefuted testimonies" are,

however, not good enough: they were shrugged off in their time as useless, for the recollections they embody are too imprecise and too long after the fact to bear cross-examination. Neither witness could even be positive, in the end, which book he was describing, let alone what had once been in it; this testimony is soft hearsay. Second is the "fact" (page 339) that the Folio had been handled by an eighteenth-century binder, and "in rebounding, its pages were very slightly trimmed, and at several places the binder's knife cut through an emendation in the 'Old corrector's' hand removing part of the correction". A good point, if true, and it would show that the emendations were in the book long before Collier owned it. But it isn't true. Ganzel gives five instances (page 44), and my examination of the Folio itself in March, 1983, leads to my calling the first patently false: a strip, possibly removing an "old correction", being cut from the top of the leaf, but certainly not by the rebinder; the second untrue: the emendation is not touched, though an earlier scribble in a different hand is; the third incomprehensibly false: nothing whatever is cropped off; the fourth highly doubtful: here the emendation is, probably by accident, written into the end of the page; and the fifth wrong: what is cropped is *not* an emendation. These are presumably Ganzel's best examples.

One "factual" argument is left, based on Ganzel's "scrutiny" of the Perkins Folio itself, and some of the emendations it contains. On a quite different front, we must understand, the accepted text of *Titus Andronicus* has been radically reordered since the discovery, in 1904, of a 1594 First (extant) Quarto, containing many readings which are obviously more authoritative than those of the 1600 Second Quarto, or of the First Folio, itself set from Q2, Q1, at the Folger Library, is still unique; its editor of 1936, Joseph Quincy Adams, itemized the divergent readings, and conjectured, persuasively, that the large group of most important variants near the end of the play came about because the compositor of Q2 had used a copy of Q1 which was defective in the last three leaves (K2-4; not just K4, as Ganzel says). Because of this he was forced to invent text to take out what he had, and while his inventions read not implausibly, the recovery of Q1 of course supersedes them. Since no

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modern scholar, including Collier, had ever seen Q1. It would be remarkable if the Old Corrector followed its text in any way but the most arbitrary, and this is just what Ganelz claims: the Old Corrector bases a few of his corrections on Q1 of *Titus*, and these cannot have come from any other source. Ergo, Collier is not here the Old Corrector. And because all the emendations in the Perkins Folio are in the same hand, he is never the Old Corrector. And because the Old Corrector is supposed, later on (page 416), to have written spurious ballads in a commonplace-book preserved at Folger, Collier cannot be guilty of that either.

This is so straightforward an argument, among so much banter and ingenuity, that we must take careful account of it. How many and of what nature are the dependent corrections? Ganelz says (page 342) "in six instances [the Old Corrector] changed the Perkins text to match Q1. Four of these changes might have been conjectured..." (Ganelz's italics: they are indeed trifling, and no mention is made of the dozens of emendations which have nothing to do with Q1). Now Joseph Quincy Adams identifies over a hundred substantive differences, and if the Old Corrector adopted Q1 readings "very idiosyncratically" he was indeed hard on his secret source – for two dozen lines in the last six pages are materially different in the better text, only two words of which (claims Ganelz; one, say I) the Old Corrector chooses to consider.

The idea of any annotator "using" a comparative text in this way is bewildering, but let us carry on: first is the alteration of "haynous Tiger" to "raucous Tiger" by crossing through "hay" and substituting "raucous" in the margin. Because "haynous" is intelligible (if not very attractive), Ganelz thinks "there is no possible explanation for the appearance of this emendation in the Perkins Folio except that the Old Corrector found the word in Q1, preferred it, and inserted it into his folio." Well, yes, there is a simple explanation: "raucous" is precisely what appears with "tiger" a page earlier, when Lucius (V.ii.5) calls Aaron "this raucous tiger," and I think our forger quite correctly deemed that a better epithet. (Collier later cast doubt on its "necessity", a typical gesture of disingenuousness which he carries to an extreme with his Spenser forgeries: it was meant to take in the sceptics, and it takes in Ganelz (page 344).) At any rate, "raucous" is, in editorial terms a traditional emendation based on similar letter-forms (and Ganelz misleads the reading in both quarters, as he misreports Adams's hypothesis about the damage to the setting copy of Q1, and extends Adams's "hole" far upward on a leaf to accommodate this crux).

"An equally compelling alteration," says Ganelz, "occurs earlier in the same act": Marcus to the Roman multitude, "Behold us now," restored to Q1's "Behold us pleading," and I admit that this would be hard to explain as the Old Corrector's independent correction. It is metrically a little rough, and not called for by the sense. According to Ganelz the Old Corrector deleted "now" and wrote "pleading" into the margin. Subsequently he – or someone else – thought differently about the correction, and the deletion was removed and the marginal note partially erased.

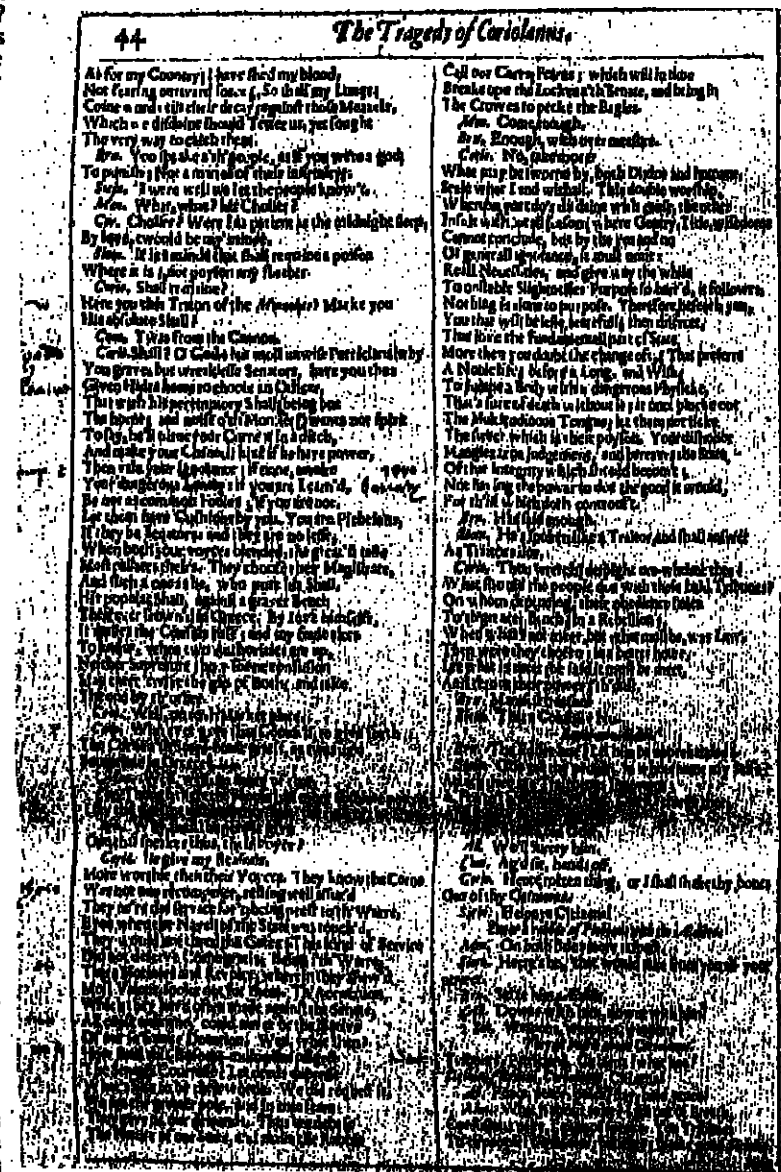
But once again this is simply not true. There is a marginal reading which is indeed "erased," very successfully (these are, quite a lot of readings erased in this area of text: many afterthoughts) but it cannot be "pleading." I am not sure what it is, even with what Collier, the letters "th" seem to begin it. How Ganelz could read this residue as "pleading" I leave to him. He reproduces "raucous" in the single plate of mixed manuscript samples; but not (the blur in the margin supposed to be "pleading").

These two readings, one explicable as a conjecture inspired by prior text, and one a ghost (to put it kindly), Ganelz goes on to say "prove beyond question that the Old Corrector knew and used the 1594 Q1 *Titus Andronicus*" and hence that Collier "could not have been the Old Corrector" because (as is surely true) had he known of Q1 he would have proudly announced it. That the Old Corrector had access to a first quarto of *Titus* is of course not proven – indeed his lack of interest in any of its really

important ameliorations virtually demonstrates the contrary – but we hear elsewhere that "the real Old Corrector... collated [his Folio] with a number of early quartos..." (my italics).

Does this in itself imply that Collier was guilty? No, but it certainly means that he is not "proved" innocent, which has by now become the burden of two hundred pages for Ganelz, and the heart of his thesis.

Evidence of Collier's guilt is finally to be sought in the long tedious arguments about motive and textual coincidence which Ganelz slants mercilessly, but also in the "other" matters to which he pays so little attention. What follows is by no means a list of all the "minor" forgeries, but a few which deserve special attention.



That there is nothing of this sort provided by Ganelz is a terrible omission. Almost the first obligation of any life of John Payne Collier would be a systematic account of everything he has been accused of – even if every instance was now thought a canard.

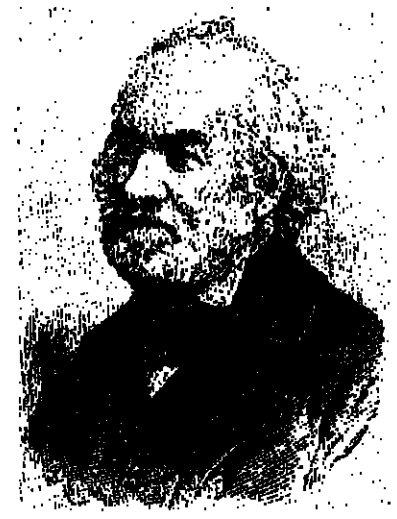
(1) *Henslowe's Diary*: In 1831 Collier published his generally excellent *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, the first major history of the Shakespearean stage, and the first serious attempt at an author-by-author, play-by-play catalogue of early dramatic literature since Baker (1764), if not Langbaine (1691). Among his many genuine new disclosures, however, were several forged additions to the important account book of Philip Henslowe, a leading theatrical manager of the 1590s, and the father-in-law of the greatest tragic actor of his time, Edward Alleyn. Henslowe's papers survive at Dulwich College, from Alleyn's original bequest, and they were studied and extracted by Edmund Malone for the theatrical appendix to his *Variorum Shakespeare* of 1790. Collier re-examined the Diary (along with other Alleyn papers discussed more fully by Ganelz) and published new extracts; in 1845 he was to edit the whole text for the first time, and again this work was valuable. But between Malone's own transcript of the diary (which he employed only to select the passages he thought most relevant) and 1831, at least ten modern forgeries crept into the manuscript, interlined entries in a fairly clumsy imitation secretary hand, all of which are "meaty" and all of which Collier prints for the first time, with particular emphasis. Most famous, perhaps, is the payment to "Thomas dickers" (ie Dekker), for "adycions to frostus" and "a prolog to

Marloes 'Tembelen', which Ganelz tells us "was the first contemporary evidence to support the assumption that [Tamburlaine] was by Marlowe" (pages 46-7, giving no indication that the entry is a forgery! Ganelz's cryptic footnote says merely that "three other items from Henslowe's diary printed for the first time in *HEDP* were to become infamous," and cites Warner's *Dulwich Catalogue* of 1881, where the allegations are indeed to be found).

Now in fact all modern editors of Henslowe, and of Marlowe and Dekker, know this passage to be a fabrication, and there are at least nine (not three) other fabrications identified by scholars since Collier, but Ganelz scatters only a few hints to that effect – in his introductory chapter, page 7, among "assertions" by Collier's

Greg thinks a forgery Foakes and Rickett think genuine; one which Greg thinks wrong Foakes and Rickett think right. This is a characteristic problem with the mass of the suspected "minor" forgeries, and the reason why they are, as I said, far more dangerous than the more celebrated Perkins emendations.

(2) *The Stationers' Register*: Another deprecation of Collier's was that endorsed by the Stationers' Company, whose original manuscript Registers, a great list of books entered for copyright from 1557 forward, have been sophisticated. Others before Collier had made extracts from them, but he published in 1848-9, with Supplements in 1861-3, a larger collection of transcripts than had hitherto found print. Among Collier's selections were abundant modern



(Above) John Payne Collier: an engraving from a photograph.

(Left) A page of the Perkins Folio of Shakespeare, reproduced from S. Schoenbaum's *William Shakespeare: Records and Images* (Scolar Press, 1981). One of the Old Corrector's emendations, shown here, became celebrated: at *Coriolanus* III.1.131-2 ("How shall this bosom multiplied digest [The Senate's] courtesy?"), "blissom multitude" for "bosom multiplied"; and even Alexander Dyce adopted it in his edition. In his nineties, Collier wrote in his *Autobiography*: "if the proposed emendations are not genuine, then I claim them as mine; and there I intend to leave myself further trouble: no edition of Shakespeare, while the world stands, can now be published without them."

forgeries, described by Cyprian Blagden as "small pieces of evidence to support his theories of authorship" (*The Stationers' Company* (1960), page 260). They are inserted in the manuscript as well, although sixty-five years earlier William Herbert covering the same areas of text had "misled" them. A full account is given by Franklin Dickey in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1960. Ganelz devotes several pages to Collier's "good" edition, "a milestone in literary historical research," and says nothing whatever of the forgeries. Yet no one, before Collier procured access to the original Registers, had made the fabrications public. And again, they continue to contaminate scholarship on the period to the present day.

(3) *Title-page ascriptions* in "contemporary" hands: There are many of these, none of which I find in Ganelz's book. In 1862, for example, Collier suggested in *Notes and Queries* the authorship, by Kyd, of an anonymous black-letter tract, *The Murder of John Brewen* (1592), published by a slightly disreputable stationer of Lombard Street, John Kyd (no known relation). Collier based his suggestion on a unique copy of the book at Lambeth Palace, upon the title of which we now find "John Kyd" in a contemporary (?) manuscript, and at the end of the text "Tho. Kyd" in a laboured hand, unlike Kyd's own, which was unknown in 1862. Collier republished the tract itself in 1863, and it is duly included in the still standard edition of Kyd edited by F. S. Boas (1901); as such it forms part of Charles Crawford's *Concordance of Kyd*, and several studies of the playwright. But twenty years before Collier, S. R. Maitland catalogued the early Lambeth books in great detail, and

said nothing of any manuscript ascription; and forty years ago R. M. Gorall found in Collier's own copy of his reprint trial run of the *Kyd Notes*, 1942, that Modern Language Association scholars had rejected Kyd's authorship of *John Brewen*, but the case is not finally closed.

Two anonymous plays often attributed to Robert Greene and to Shakespeare (*George a Greene* and *Lochnie*) have rather a different career: one surviving copy of each bears a holograph notation supposedly by Sir George Buc, Master of the Revels, identifying their authors respectively as Greene and Charles Tynley. Collier was again the first to publicize the attributions, and both quartos had passed through Part II of the Richard Heber sale (1834), when Collier was himself retained by the auctioneers to catalogue Part IV. Because of his involvement, speeches have been found to dispute the handwriting evidence of Sir E. K. Chambers who accepted one, denied the second, but then changed his mind) and S. A. Tannenbaum (1933), who saw forgery everywhere and roundly blamed Collier. Interestingly – and here again is the vexation surrounding everything Collier touched – the inscriptions are now generally agreed to be genuine. Or at least most of the inscriptions: on *George a Greene* there is a secondary note probably too good to be true, "teste W. Shakespeare". The most recent writers on the subject (Chambers, Greg, Seymour De Ricci, Mark Eccles, R. C. Bald and Charles A. Parnell (1965)), not one cited by Ganelz) incline to accept all but this last flimsy as genuine. Where John Payne Collier fits in is hard to say, but he may have introduced one of the two titles with its suspect element. He gave it as his reconsidered opinion in 1863 that all of the manuscript was suspicious, a disarming gesture if ever there was one. But whatever Collier's responsibility may be, Ganelz, who one might expect to pay special heed to episodes in which Collier seems wrongly to have been suspected, knows nothing of the matter; and in the scholarly court the jury is still out.

(4) *Ballads and others*: From an early age Collier had a penchant for verse-writing, and indeed published a long Spenserian poem of his own in 1822, not a success, but competent, and warmly praised by Lamb. Many of the questioned texts unmentioned by Ganelz are also in verse, mainly doggerel, and profess to be of the early or mid-seventeenth century. There is for example a ballad on the Codrington Theatre riot of 1617, with a remarkable allusion to Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, published by Collier in *HEDP*, for which no source was cited or is now known to us. It has generally been discredited, as have ballads on *Othello* ("about the date of the Protectorate"), the extant MS forged, but not in Collier's hand) and "The Inhabited Island", with a plot resembling that of *The Tempest*, the great mass of "original" ballads preserved by Collier and in part published by him in 1848-9 is treated in an Appendix by Ganelz, in which their authenticity is defended, once again attacking the argumentative logic of their impugnors, and paying no attention to their content.

At the very outset of his career (1816) Collier seems to have invented a sonnet by Thomas Churchyard on Sir Philip Sidney, nothing about which we find in Ganelz; see D. T. B. Wood in *Review of English Studies* (1925), and the additional material in E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, II (1930), pages 384-93. Near the end of it we find his writing to another Elizabethan enthusiast, Joseph Woodfall, "I have a last major correspondence, with a song – not over anonymous black-letter tract, *The Murder of John Brewen* (1592), published by a slightly disreputable stationer of Lombard Street, John Kyd (no known relation). Collier based his suggestion on a unique copy of the book at Lambeth Palace, upon the title of which we now find "John Kyd" in a contemporary (?) manuscript, and at the end of the text "Tho. Kyd" in a laboured hand, unlike Kyd's own, which was unknown in 1862. Collier republished the tract itself in 1863, and it is duly included in the still standard edition of Kyd edited by F. S. Boas (1901); as such it forms part of Charles Crawford's *Concordance of Kyd*, and several studies of the playwright. But twenty years before Collier, S. R. Maitland catalogued the early Lambeth books in great detail, and

gives no real consideration to any of these nagging impostures, save as part of the running controversy between Collier (who turned silent) and Clement Mansfield Ingleby, with later adumbrations by F. J. Furnivall; and as always Collier is pictured as victimized by an unscrupulous Establishment.

(5) *Spenser*: This is a blockbuster forgery. In 1862 Collier issued a long-promised full edition of Spenser's *Works*, which has since been esteemed, perhaps by default, the best product of his editorial enterprise. Ganelz calls it "the conclusion of a lifetime's devotion to Spenser... the crowning achievement of his career... and the most complete and accurate text of Spenser to appear since the poet's death." Even G. F. Warner, in the *DNB*, calls it "an excellent edition", and Collier himself considered it his unshakeable masterpiece.

But just as in 1850 Collier required an "edge" to advance his new edition of Shakespeare beyond those projected by Dyce, Singer, or Halliwell, and came up with an annotated source available only to himself, in 1862 his Spenser, proposed as the replacement for Henry John Todd's standard but weak edition of 1805, sought another. It was unexpectedly up against a rival in the excellent 1855 Boston edition – not well known in England – of Professor F. J. Child of Harvard. Once again Collier found his edge, again an annotated folio. It was no anonymity this time, but the Elizabethan poet Michael Drayton's personal copy, signed by him and enriched with over sixty "contemporary" emendations in *The Faerie Queene* alone. These Collier made the heart of his new contribution to Spenser's text, for the much-valued return to the quartos of 1590 and 1596 had been largely anticipated by Child, whose work Collier assimilated, with acknowledgments ranging from complimentary to the condescending. Drayton's marginalia were curious, similar to those in the Perkins Folio, duplicating for instance the eccentricity of altering part of a printed word at a time, and as he had done with Shakespeare, Collier made a great show of judicious selection: some half of the corrections were noted, often with detailed commentary, but

rejected as "unnecessary" – something again calculated to disarm suspicion, but nevertheless fodder for the editor's extensive apparatus. Collier simply got away with this escapade, perhaps because no one was much interested, and the spurious notes have come down to haunt even the most recent readers and scholars of Spenser. The standard Variorum text of 1932-56 records every one of them, and no one since Collier has called the least of his chivare into question.

The "Drayton Folio" itself survives, full of Collier's own notes, and the purported red pencilings by Drayton. Collier wrote out a long catalogue slip for the volume, with sale-value certainly in mind ("This beautiful & genuine copy, etc.), in which he emphasizes his own use of it, and denies the fake authorship, calls the red pencil markings Drayton's and allows finally that "the black pencil marks were probably by another hand" (my italics). As they are undisputedly in Collier's own hand, this is a cheap concession. All the red marginalia are modern forgeries, of course, and one finds it odd, if a function of limited access, that no doubt has hitherto beca on the relic. It has come down since Collier through the collections of Marsden J. Perry, Frank Brewster and Arthur A. Houghton (sale, June 11, 1980, lot 459).

No reflection on the Spenserian claims is to be found in Ganelz's biography. As biography, *Fortune and Men's Eyes* is so seriously flawed by its central misconception that little of it survives to be credited. True, it is fair to Collier in many matters of genuine achievement, and I confess I never thought that in reading the first life of "the Old Man" (his own winsome self-deprecation) I would be labouring the obvious about Collier's crimes, rather than pleading his redeeming virtues. These include the faded industry, the sensible influence upon collectors like Devonshire and Ellesmere, the valued contributions towards the completion of a British Museum catalogue, discarded though they were, and the sincere, if halting, progress towards sounder editorial principles for Elizabethan texts. Here Ganelz is properly complimentary, although he exaggerates the wisdom of Collier's

## Out of singing and into satire

Julie Hankey

REAVLEY GAIN

The Children of Paul: the story of a theatre company, 1553-1608  
213pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£9.50.  
0 521 24360 2

The pleasure and value of Reavley Gair's history of the Paul's children's theatre company lie chiefly in its vivid picture of the actual physical setting of the plays, not only inside the theatre, but round about, in the cathedral stables, in the churchyard and in the adjoining parishes. If one were inclined to see a sharp contrast between the scholarly and ecclesiastical milieu of the little choristers and the rough world of the adult stage, this book is a corrective.

The scene in the cathedral was Brueghel-like: here on one side, "by st. Faith's door" are little boys "pissing upon stones in the church... to slide upon as upon yess"; there is a dog "dellin' the matt" upon which the vicars-choral kneel to sing the Litany, the steeples are lighted with "in type of divine service" hallowe, throw stones, and make great noises, hard down plaine into the quire"; at the extreme end of the south aisle a glazier brings his horse and cart up the steps of the church to his shop in a side chapel; and through the main aisles there is a continuous tramp "of all kynd of burden bearing people, as colliers with sacks of coles, porters with baskets of flesh".

Admittedly, this disorder had long outraged the authorities, but nothing they did could prevent the public at large from mingling its business with that of the church. The church dignitaries themselves observed no strict divisions between the secular and the divine. Most of them controlled the lease on plots in the churchyard, so

that the place was turned, says Gair, into "a cluster of jumbled shops and sheds... tenements and mansion houses", some of them built against the cathedral walls, obscuring its windows, and all of them giving off coal smoke and foul sewage. The yard was notorious for violence, some of it committed by the clerics – one senior cardinal, for example, accusing his junior partner of beating his (the cardinal's) wife, and of having "grogged" a servant-maid "forcibly sundrie times".

In among all this lived and worked the choristers, singing angelically, as foreigners testified, but most of the time on the look-out for their "spare money", a fine exacted from anyone entering the church with spurs on, was a part "whereon they set their whole souls", even interrupting people at their prayers to get it. Most of this fascinating detail comes from *The Visitation Report of Bishop Bancroft* (1598) and Gair makes similarly good use of the local parish registers to build up a picture of the surrounding population – artisan-trademen, lawyers, church officials all living cheek by jowl with the destitute and desperate.

Infant mortality was high, bubonic plague was a recurring calamity, but the district was, according to his analysis, populous and, on the whole, prosperous. The establishment of Paul's children, by the early 1570s, in a local playhouse of their own, was a commercially sound enterprise. Gair uses the content of the plays themselves and contemporary evidence of tradesmen and their servants attending Paul's playhouse (cheap at twopenny, fourpenny and sixpence, compared with the south bank prices plus the boat fee), to challenge the usual view that the boys' entertainments were exclusive. Lyly's courtly plays were the exception rather than the rule, and his own pretensions themselves suggest that he did not entirely meet the taste of his playhouse audiences.

reliance on old, and defective, texts of Shakespeare and others. Collier did call special attention to the rougher, earlier and more authoritative printings of his authors, but his "methodology" depended less on the principles which we now generally accept (above all that "authority" stems from the author, as close as we can get to him, and not from ourselves) than on the simpler notion that "early" is better than "late", but only when modern sense perceives a crux. Thus he could treat his spurious emenders a line at a time, accepting some readings as desirable and rejecting others as unnecessary, with the criterion throughout not the supposed authority of the annotator but the imagined need of the modern reader.

Hemmed in as he is by his estimate of Collier's guiltlessness, Ganelz never properly confronts the question of why Collier should have done what he did. I cannot offer any solution in the compass of a review, but I think (casually) that money may have been more of a factor than we have suspected. The profit, or lack of it, from a successful edition or a flop was not inconsiderable in Collier's day, and the many projects he pursued virtually unrewarded cannot altogether obscure the need he most certainly felt for remuneration now and then. There are many indications in his letters and journals of a gnawing poverty, alongside other needs, which literary success could satisfy in part; a biographer might consider at least the temptation to forgery based on want.

Collier himself aside, the quick estimates one may be tempted to form of his eminent contemporaries ought not to depend entirely on a thesis-biography of their friend or foe. Ganelz is quite unpleasant about gentle and talented scholars like Dyce, and positively nasty about major rivals like Madden and Panizel. Even Madden is subjected to unworthy public reflections, but he has missed some of the best material at Harvard (among W. A. Jackson's books), the Philipps correspondence at King's College, Cambridge, and the Halliwell Papers at the University of Edinburgh, as well as the two largest private collections known to me (my own and one in Japan). Among a hundred letters in the former, which would

answered by others – though it is true that Sir Frederick Madden is hardly a lovable figure. To make him suspect, or to convict him of forging evidence against Collier, by standards far vaguer than those applied to the Old Corrector, is none the less irresponsible.

Is it not remarkable that a full-length biography, over a decade in the making, fails so seriously to meet so many questions, ancient and modern? It does seem hard to believe that at one time or other Ganelz did not find himself unable to explain away yet one more damning detail, but perhaps selective ignoring of sources will explain even that. There is no bibliography, and the index is appalling (no entries for Marlowe, Dekker, Spenser, or Dulwich, for example, and bad samples for everything else), so one can only guess what Ganelz didn't use. Among recent publications he has probably not seen Richard Schrader's *Reminiscences of Alexander Dyce* (1972), and while he employs Edward Miller's biography of Panizel in his unsympathetic characterization I doubt if he knows the work of Philip Welmerskirch (1981), Nancy Brault (1972), or even Giulio Caprin (Florence, 1943). He has certainly overlooked the important basis of most judgments of Collier. In essence *Fortune and Men's Eyes* is a contribution to just that prejudiced tradition, and itself a perpetuation of the controversy. Along with the controversy it perpetuates the results of Collier's crimes. He died unrepentant, as Chambers notes, although perhaps not so "devoid of conscience... in literary matters" as G. F. Warner suggests. Indeed at the end he seems almost to have cried out for conviction and absolution. "I am bitterly [sad] and most sincerely grieved that in every way I am such a specifiable offender. I am ashamed of almost every act of my life," he wrote, fifteen months before his death, a *crise de coeur* Ganelz will not take as an injunction to the biographer. Seeking to be understood, appreciated and excused, I think, Collier has been alternately beasted and apotheosized, and finally left hostage to the futile controversy of his own making. Perhaps that, like it or not, is to be his ultimate punishment.

A pity, in the end, that the first biography of the Old Corrector – and presumably the last for a while – has so little of lasting merit and so great a potential to confuse and distract. It will be astonishing if in the future it is not given silent credence by the majority who have not read it or behind it, much as the pamphlet warfare Ganelz rightly discredits has heretofore formed the basis of most judgments of Collier. In essence *Fortune and Men's Eyes* is a contribution to just that prejudiced tradition, and itself a perpetuation of the controversy. Along with the controversy it perpetuates the results of Collier's crimes. He died unrepentant, as Chambers notes, although perhaps not so "devoid of conscience... in literary matters" as G. F. Warner suggests. Indeed at the end he seems almost to have cried out for conviction and absolution. "I am bitterly [sad] and most sincerely grieved that in every way I am such a specifiable offender. I am ashamed of almost every act of my life," he wrote, fifteen months before his death, a *crise de coeur* Ganelz will not take as an injunction to the biographer. Seeking to be understood, appreciated and excused, I think, Collier has been alternately beasted and apotheosized, and finally left hostage to the futile controversy of his own making. Perhaps that, like it or not, is to be his ultimate punishment.

childishness. Constant reference is made to it in the plays. These were not like the boys in the adult companies, who endeavoured to lose themselves in the characters they portrayed: the children's plays, on the contrary, frequently use anti-illusionistic devices, particularly burlesque, so as to exploit the gap between actor and character. It is not that Gair does not mention these devices. He does, but in a loose way, play by play. One might agree or disagree with him over this or that – for example over the degree of deliberate exaggeration in some of Marston's language. But overall there is not the breadth of idea implicit in his subject, a breadth suggestively at hand, for example, in a book he lists in his bibliography, Philippe Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood*.

The whole question of where the child stood vis-à-vis the adult world: at the beginning and at the end of the period, receives no consideration. Ariès might have seen, in the flowering and withering of the boy's companies, an illustration of his thesis that the child, from being regarded as a smaller, less complete member of the adult world, came to be seen as an altogether separate creature, to be kept innocent of the imperfections of maturity, and therefore (one might conclude) with nothing to offer of any consequence to its seniors. In his book *The Child Actors: a chapter in Elizabethan stage history* Hillebrand, without going into anything so ambitious, nevertheless touches on the old and officially sanctioned ceremony of the Boy Bishop, a sort of Lord of Marlowe, as having some bearing on the subject. But Gair leaves these things alone. Perhaps they are, impossibly speculative. And yet the idea that the boys, whose plays were chiefly satirical and didactic, were looked upon as, in themselves, parodies of humanity – little as, as they were so often called, the notion that they were felt to be, along with Pools and Vices, in some way salutary, does open a perspective

on their theatre. And it fits, perhaps not fortuitously, with the easy-going encroachments between the secular and the divine inside the cathedral.

As the Puritan spirit began to tidy up this seeming muddle during the first years of the seventeenth century, so the boys, on their side, having already imprudently involved themselves in the Marprelate controversy (for which they were temporarily banned), began to abuse their old privilege. Like the skimmity riders in *The Mayor of Carterbridge*, they acted out a local scandal, again to the displeasure of the authorities. As Hardy's character says: "Tis too rough a joke, and apt to wake riots in towns." Their days were numbered. Gair gives several reasons for the demise of St Paul's theatre, one of the most cogent being that by the end they had really ceased to be children at all, and were young men doing what the likes of Burbage could do better. But why had young boys stopped being drafted in from the "choir", as they always had been? If their Master was more interested in music, why did they not go on attracting others who were interested in them as boy actors? Could it be that they had simply become an anachronism, as the Fool was beginning to be, left over from an earlier order of things? Although it avoids this kind of question, Gair's book is nevertheless, on its own ground, informative and at times fascinating.

Among the nine essays in *Aspects of King Lear* (59pp., Cambridge University Press, £15, paperback £5.50, 0 521 24604 0), edited by Kenneth Muir and Stanley Wells and originally published in *Shakespeare Survey* are "King Lear: A Retrospect, 1939-79" by G. R. Hibbard, "Some Aspects of the Style of King Lear" by Wilfrid M. T. Nowotny, "Madness in King Lear" by Kenneth Muir. The book is illustrated with "post-war" photographs of various productions of the play.

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# Consigned to extermination

## Abraham Brumberg

### YISRAEL GUTMAN

The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt

Translated from the Hebrew by Ina Friedman  
487pp. Brighton: Harvester. £25.  
0 7108 0411 3

When the Germans entered Warsaw on September 30, 1939, there were nearly 360,000 Jews - almost one-third of the total population - living in the already ravaged Polish capital. Like their Gentile neighbours, the Jews could expect no mercy from the (to quote a contemporary diary) "well fed, sleek and fat" conquerors. Indeed, within a few days the armed representatives of the Herrenvolk were amusing themselves on the streets of Warsaw by forcing well-dressed Jewish women to clean latrines with their underwear, plucking the beards of Orthodox Jews, and engaging in sundry other high-spirited pastimes - frequently to the obvious delight of the non-Jewish onlookers. More ominously, the Wehrmacht began to round up thousands of Jews for forced labour, and to confiscate Jewish property - sporadically at first, and increasingly with exemplary Teutonic thoroughness. But not even in their most gruesome nightmares could anyone imagine that these acts of wanton sadism were but an innocent prelude to what Hitler, in January 1939, had boastfully described as "the eventual annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe", and that within four years the Warsaw Jewish community would be no more, its homes razed by bombs and artillery fire, its members either murdered in the gas ovens of Treblinka and Majdanek or slaughtered in a last-ditch attempt to save their honour, if not their lives.

The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943 is the story of those four fateful years. It is a work of supreme scholarship, whose shattering impact derives in no small measure from the well-nigh dispassionate manner in which the author musters, presents and examines his evidence. Nowhere within its nearly 500 densely packed pages will the reader find any reference to the author's own experience. Yet Yisrael Gutman, a distinguished historian associated with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, himself lived in the Warsaw Ghetto, and took part in the tragic uprising of April 1943. The fact that he did not yield to the all-too-human penchant for personal retrospection, but chose to rely exclusively on "priced sources" (German, Polish, Jewish) and on carefully cross-checked interviews is a tribute to his own integrity and to the results of his prodigious labours. The book covers the subject as no other volume has hitherto - and is unlikely ever to be surpassed.

A work so rich in texture and detail is difficult to summarize. Let me, instead, dwell on only a few of its most striking features. One of them is surely the painstaking depiction of life in the Warsaw Ghetto, which was formally established in November 1940, and which was reduced to three small areas containing about 50,000 inhabitants after the mass deportation of most of the Jews to death camps in the eastern reaches of the Generalgouvernement in the summer of 1942. It provides a harrowing account of suffering on the one hand, and of the efforts made by the steadily shrinking Jewish community to maintain at least a modicum of organized existence, and to keep its collective body and mind alive, on the other. Under appalling conditions of mass starvation and epidemics - which the Jewish doctors, with virtually no access to medical supplies, found difficult to contain - of lack of elementary necessities, including fuel and clothing, and of the pervasive sense of isolation (radioes were confiscated, and mail severely censored), the Jews of Warsaw nevertheless managed to create a network of charitable and "self-help" institutions, to provide their children with some education, to stage cultural events such as poetry readings, dramatic performances, scholarly lectures and the like, and to erect a

flourishing political underground, dominated by the Jewish socialist Bund and various left-wing Zionist (mostly youth) organizations.

There was, of course, another side to the Ghetto's social fabric, less attractive, even repellent: the detested Jewish police, the curious institution of "Thirteen", which combined various administrative and police functions with ostensible charitable activities, and whose officials were motivated by little more than personal greed and lust for power, and finally the notorious *Judenrat*. The last of these, despite the honourable motives of some of its members (among them its head, Adam Czerniakow), in effect served as an instrument of the Nazi design for the extermination of Warsaw's Jews - including, in the end, the *Judenrat* members themselves. Side by side with the paper-covered corpses and tattered wrecks staggering through the streets of the Ghetto there were restaurants (privileged officials and a handful of people who managed to hold on to bits of Orthodox Jews, and engaging in sundry other high-spirited pastimes - frequently to the obvious delight of the non-Jewish onlookers. More ominously, the Wehrmacht began to round up thousands of Jews for forced labour, and to confiscate Jewish property - sporadically at first, and increasingly with exemplary Teutonic thoroughness. But not even in their most gruesome nightmares could anyone imagine that these acts of wanton sadism were but an innocent prelude to what Hitler, in January 1939, had boastfully described as "the eventual annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe", and that within four years the Warsaw Jewish community would be no more, its homes razed by bombs and artillery fire, its members either murdered in the gas ovens of Treblinka and Majdanek or slaughtered in a last-ditch attempt to save their honour, if not their lives.

A question that for years has preoccupied layman and scholar alike is why so many Jews allowed themselves to be killed, rising against their satanic oppressors only at the very end. I confess I find the very wording of this question offensive, implicitly assuming as it does that armed revolt is the only form of opposition to evil, and ignoring the fact that (as Gutman's study so convincingly demonstrates) plans for armed resistance were conceived and executed before the final Armageddon. It is true, none the less, that most of the organized resistance came months after the death camps began operating, and it is legitimate to examine why this was so. Gutman's explanations are so compelling as to make one hope that this question will never be raised again. To begin with he cites the work of the French historian Henri Michel, which shows that the behaviour of Jews did not differ essentially from that of other "severely oppressed" groups during the Second World War - eg, forced labourers transferred to Germany, prisoners of war, and inmates of concentration camps. All of them were "resolutely... the most strongly motivated towards spontaneous resistance", yet they were "for the most part, conspicuously resigned to their fate", having been subjected to a shock of such magnitude as to blunt their perceptions of reality, erode their will, and imbue them with "an astonishing degree of tolerance and submission".

To be sure, the position of the Jews was unique: no other people (with the exception of the gypsies, who had virtually no tradition of social and institutional cohesiveness) was consigned to total extermination. The Orthodox community had its own concept of heroism, which was the dignified acceptance of sacrifice for the greater glory of God (*Kiddush Hashem*). Most of the others, however (and it must be emphasized that - *pace* Michel - the Polish Jewish community was to a very large extent secular and modern), opposed the idea of armed rebellion advocated by the left-wing parties and youth movements, for more pragmatic reasons, and above all because they could not - as indeed who could? - believe that the Nazis were bent on their annihilation. The Germans went to extraordinary lengths to disguise the real aim of the deportations, assuring their helpless captives that they were being sent to labour camps where they would all be housed, fed and looked after. To accept these assurances was, in a sense, an act of faith in the elementary values of Western civilization. To oppose the deportations, with no weapons to speak of, was to risk certain death. Even when the first news about the death camps reached the residents of the Ghetto, they were rejected as

figments of inflamed imaginations. The human mind could not assimilate such evil. To be treated like *Untermenschen* was, however dreadful and humiliating, part of the Jewish experience. To be considered vermin was beyond human understanding.

There was yet another factor that contributed to the erosion of Jewish will and spirit, and that was the behaviour of the surrounding population. The attitude of the Poles toward the systematic persecution and extermination of the Jewish community has been the subject of many contentious (and frequently sanctimonious) claims made by émigré and Communist Poles alike, and at the same time of exaggerated accusations by Jewish survivors. It is a subject which merits special consideration, but suffice it to say that Gutman's carefully balanced treatment and documentation make palpably clear that the bulk of the Polish populace regarded the fate of their Jewish neighbours with indifference at best, with outright hostility at worst. There were, indeed, some luminous exceptions, all the more impressive in view of the fact that any active help given to Jews was punishable by death, often of the culprit's family as well. Gutman notes and pays tribute to those Poles who, for humanitarian, religious and ideological reasons, risked their lives in order to snatch yet another victim from the enemy maw. One might wish that Gutman had said

rather more about the Council for Aid to Jews (*Zegota*), which was established in Warsaw in late 1942. But he generously acknowledges the fact that for many Poles, both intellectuals and simple "villagers and townfolk", the "aid and rescue of Jews per se became an all-consuming mission".

The final chapters of Gutman's book are devoted to an exhaustively detailed account of the uprising in the Ghetto, which began on April 19, 1943, and which lasted, fitfully, for some six to seven weeks - that is, well into June. As Gutman notes, "it took the Germans longer to quell the Warsaw Ghetto uprising than it had taken them to defeat entire countries". What emerges so starkly from the account is that while the number of actual combatants was about 750 (500 from the ranks of the left-wing Zionists, Bundists and Communists, and 250 representing the right-wing Revisionist Zionists), it was actually the whole population of the Ghetto, including some "wildcat" groups not affiliated with any political organization, which participated in the resistance. By that time there were no voices clamouring for caution or compliance. It was obvious that the Germans were out to massacre the rest of the Jewish community, and the 50,000 Ghetto inhabitants were determined to resist them, some with weapons (mostly home-made Molotov cocktails), some by hiding in underground passages and bunkers that had been constructed in the weeks preceding the final German onslaught. It was a struggle to the death - and it ended in the death of almost all of the desperate, abandoned and tenacious remnant of what had once been the most populous Jewish community in Poland. The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943, is an enduring monument to their martyrdom.

He also shows the other side: the resilience of antisemitic prejudices among most Poles, and even more importantly the fact that the London-based Polish Government as well as its armed forces inside Poland (the Home Army - AK) were shockingly remiss in failing both to alert world opinion to the mass murder of the Jews (this despite heart-rending pleas from Poland), and to offer any assistance, either by hiding and sheltering the victims or by supplying the fighters with more than a handful of (largely unusable) weapons. This situation changed after the first battles in January 1943, and more markedly so after the outbreak of the uprising two months later. But even after this remarkable display of courage (which, according to a publication of the Home Army, demonstrated that the Jews, hitherto steeped in "their racial materialism", finally changed their "completely passive attitude"), the Home Army contented itself with little more than ardent declarations. In fact, the revolt was partly viewed as a Communist and Russian plot designed to precipitate an untimely insurrection by the Polish population at large.

## Mary's martyred militiaman

### Peter Hebblethwaite

#### DIANA DEWAR

Saint of Auschwitz: The Story of Maksymilian Kolbe  
146pp. Darton, Longman and Todd.  
£4.95.  
0 232 51574 3

Of the millions who perished at Auschwitz, Maksymilian Kolbe has become the best known. He was a Polish Conventual Franciscan priest who gave his life so that a married man might live. Starved in an airless, windowless bunker for two weeks, he encouraged his companions with prayers and hymns and held out his arm for the injection of phenol that killed him, on the vigil of the Assumption, 1941. He was forty-seven. Of his supreme heroism and holiness there can be no doubt. He was canonized by Pope John Paul on October 10 last year.

The publicity material calls this "the first major biography of the new saint". It is true that there are no competitors in English. The hand-out further explains that the author "as an Englishwoman, Anglican and non-linguist... was not best qualified for the task". But what she lacked in background knowledge she made up for by enthusiasm and empathy. She was driven "by an extraordinary compulsion to make her journey around Kolbe". Her principal sources are the friars who lived with him at Niepokalanów and a few survivors of Auschwitz, including Franciszek Gajowicz, the man whose life he saved. These are all witnesses for whom Kolbe is self-evidently a hero and a saint.

The result is that the book belongs to hagiography rather than to history. No doubt that is what is needed this time, but one senses a missed opportunity: for Kolbe's sanctity, which is not in question, becomes more interesting if it is admitted that he came from a very odd background and held the most peculiar theological views. In the end, the devil's advocate strengthens the case for Kolbe's canonization by making sure it is thoroughly tested; but in this book, it is fast asleep.

Here are some of the oddities that might have aroused his curiosity. As a child, Kolbe was "not allowed to speak to girls without specific reason". At ten he had a vision of the Immaculate One (his preferred name for Mary) who predicted a life of purity crowned by

martyrdom: this was revealed by his mother only after his death. At sixteen he was recruited into the Franciscans along with his brother. When the two of them were thus disposed of, his parents separated. His mother became gatekeeper in a convent; his father entered the Franciscans - but he left to join Pilsudski's Legions and was hanged by the Russians in 1914.

By now Maksymilian was in Rome where he "invented a spaceship" obtained two doctorates by the age of twenty-one, suffered from tuberculosis and wanted to meet the Grand Master of the Roman Freemasons in order to convert him. A wise superior dissuaded him. Another superior perceptively remarked that he was "always trying to attack the moon with a spade".

Already Kolbe had embarked on his life's work: he had founded the "Militia of Mary Immaculate". In inter-war Poland he was best known as Guardian of Niepokalanów, the City of Mary Immaculate, where dwelt 762 friars. They dedicated themselves in conditions of considerable poverty to turning out popular publications to spread the cause. Though a peaceable man, Kolbe saw life in military terms: Niepokalanów was the "arsenal" of those who joined the militia became "knights", the publications were his "big guns" and he always had a plentiful supply of "bullets" (the "Miraculous Medal"). Missions he saw as "invasions". In 1930 he invaded Japan and despite total ignorance of the language and culture published his magazine in Japanese and opened another "City of the Immaculate" at Nagasaki.

Still this was not enough for his restless spirit. As Mrs Dewar puts it: "He had time to look at the map of the world above his desk. It was India that beckoned." So off he went. The war put a stop to it all. He turned Niepokalanów into a refuge for displaced persons, including Jews. He was arrested as an "intellectual" and Gestapo officer who came to collect him. So he moved towards his heroic, inevitable, inspiring and atrocious death at Auschwitz.

Mrs Dewar never raises an eyebrow as she unfolds this remarkable tale. She seems to regard his attitudes as typical of Polish piety, requiring no explanation. Her Anglican generosity and trust in his friends lead to the extraordinary remark that "his Marian devotion was a precursor of Vatican II". One can judge of this by some of the positions he held - none of them reported in this book.

He had vowed to become "the exclusive, unconditional, absolute, irrevocable property of the Immaculate One". He regarded himself as "her instrument, her thing" and prayed to be "transubstantiated into her, so that there remains only her". He revived the medieval thesis that Mary's mercy was a corrective to God's implacable justice: "The Immaculate One will cover us with her cloak before God's justice".

One hopes that the devil's advocate enquired politely about the orthodoxy of such statements (and there are many more in the same vein). Nor does one meet the objection by saying that his canonization vindicates his theology, for he was canonized as a martyr, not as a doctor of the Church.

The second major criticism of Kolbe is that he was antisemitic. Mrs Dewar is well aware of this and counters it with his "memorable" orders at an editorial conference: "Nothing must be published unless it could carry the byline of the Immaculate One." In fact there is somewhat clearer evidence of Kolbe's personal position in a letter, not quoted here, dated July 12, 1935.

It was addressed from Nagasaki to the editors of *Maly Dziennik* (the Little Daily) which had been founded in May of that year. It was close to the spirit of Roman Dmowski's National Constitution forbids any state to "keep troops, or ships of war in time of peace" and limits to two years at a time the government's power to raise money in support of federal armed forces. Yet warfare gave American novelists their first native material, their first "usable history". Fenimore Cooper, though he was to complain that America had "no annals for the historian" (or for the historical romancer), based *The Spy* (1821), his first novel with an American setting, on the events of the Revolutionary War, then rapidly receding into his country's "annals", and he returned to the war in *The Pilot* (1824) and *Lionel Lincoln* (1825) even as he was developing the frontier theme for which he would come to be better known abroad.

So Jeffrey Walsh's subject is an important one, even if some of it has already been treated in J. W. Aldridge's *After the Last Generation* (1951) and Stanley Copperman's *World War I and the American Novel* (1967). He has not set out to write a "comprehensive survey", he says in his preface, but "a series of arguments and analyses". Treating the poets of the First World War, Walsh contrasts the romanticism like Alan Seeger and Joyce Kilmer, who took the war seriously as an idealistic project, and modernists

## A pilgrim in Flanders

### Dominic Hibberd

#### RUPERT HART-DAVIS (Editor)

Siegfried Sassoon Diaries  
288pp. Faber. £10.50.  
0 571 11997 2

The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon  
160pp. Faber. £5.25.  
0 571 13031 0

#### SIEGRIED SASSOON

Sherston's Progress  
150pp. Faber. £2.25.  
0 571 13033 X

Sir Rupert Hart-Davis's edition of Sassoon's 1915-18 diaries matches the high standards of the 1920-22 volume which he produced two years ago. It is a third record of Sassoon's war experiences to set beside the memoirs of "George Sherston" and the poems. Sherston emerges from the comparison as a dull fellow; Sassoon himself got bored with him in *Sherston's Progress* as he was reduced to a paperback, but without the notes that would clearly be useful and took to copying directly from the 1918 diary. Much more of the "progress" can now be followed in the person of the original pilgrim. His story is not so much a study in war and politics as an account of a soul's journey; Sassoon was always a religious writer, though not always a good one. Religious questing is evident in *The War Poems*, also edited by Hart-Davis, a new collection of all the war pieces which Sassoon published and some previously unknown ones.

Sassoon kept a diary partly "to bring the hour back to me vivid and true", partly to steady his mind in the face of death. In 1915, he consciously follows Brooke into willing sacrifice but also feels, less predictably, to Vaughan, "going him on 'dazzling darkness'". His tendency to mysticism made Brooke's attitude attractive and kept

him reading authors like Vaughan and Bunyan throughout the war. The recurrent nature imagery (light, pools, rivers) in the non-satirical war poems is post-Romantic clutter unless one can allow it to have a mystical function. It has more scope in the diaries, where lyrical descriptions outnumber the battle scenes. As in Hardy and Eliot, human suffering is set into a hauntingly beautiful landscape (he reads *Tess* before the Somme).

Hardy taught Sassoon pity and irony, and delight in simple nature, but it was Edward Carpenter who freed him to accept and use his sexuality. Carpenter does not appear in these diaries, but there is a brief mention of J.G.N. Hart-Davis does not provide one of his helpful footnotes, but J. G. Nicholson was a leading figure in the half-secret world of "Uranian" poetry. In a 1917 letter to Nicholson (now at Harvard), Sassoon said that the best of his war poetry showed his search for beauty, compassion and friendship. These are typical of the Uranian values preached by Carpenter. Sassoon often reminds himself in the diaries to look for beauty, finding it in the landscape and, increasingly, in the faces of soldiers. One of the most moving passages is his lament for David Thomas (killed in March 1916), who, as Hart-Davis notes, was Sherston's "Dick Tiltwood" and the subject of several poems. There is no footnote for Sherston's closest pre-war friend, "Stephen Colwood", whose death in 1915 gives dramatic emphasis to Sherston's departure for the trenches, but his original must be Gordon Harbord (of Colwood Park), who was actually killed in August 1917. Harbord is the subject of "Together", a poem ascribed to January 1918 in *The War Poems* on the strength of a diary entry, an early copy (in Texas) is dated August 1917. But there is no diary for the second half of 1917, so one has to guess about many matters, including Sassoon's grief for Harbord.

The first satirical poem, "In the Pink", dates from February 1916, well before the Somme and before the diary really begins to show the author's anger at the war. There is a gap from August to December 1916, which is unfortunate because it conceals the thoughts and meetings which prompted his rebellion; when the narrative starts again, he is savage about everything. The 1917 lacuna is still more to be regretted, since it covers his famous protest, his treatment by Dr Rivers at Craiglockhart, his friendship with Wilfred Owen and his decision to return to the fighting. Hart-Davis does the best he can by providing a selection of letters, including some splendid responses to the protest from such people as Carpenter ("Well done, good and faithful"), Arnold Bennett ("we chaps over age... are better able to judge the war as a whole than you are"), Ottoline Morrell ("tremendously fine") and Robert Ross ("quite appalled"). But the letters from Sassoon do not fully bring out the misery he felt at "Dotyville" or his worship of Rivers, the man who succeeded in calming his rage. The doctor's significant surname is the only one of a major character that is not altered by Sherston, and in a 1918 poem Sassoon describes his eyes as "pools" of peace; Craiglockhart was a Slough of Despond, but Rivers was there to direct the pilgrim's course.

Sassoon's output at Craiglockhart is not fully apparent from *The War Poems*, which puts too many 1917 poems among 1918 work for want of research into obscure but existing evidence. Though the volume is welcome and well presented, it could have been more thorough. No variant or cancelled readings are given, though Sassoon's letters contain some interesting ones. The choice of poems from the diaries is unexplained; some lively ones are left out, while "Return" somehow slips in without a footnote although Sassoon dismissed it as "entirely artificial emotionalism". No

struggle in Spain". Why? How? By what criterion of truth? The comparison between two different accounts of the same events - one fictional and proceeding by a kind of inward meditation, the other documentary and ideologically committed - is never developed, and Walsh misses the chance to contrast two kinds of narrative "education".

I would like some comment, too, on the marginal combat status of the First World War authors treated here. The most romantic were the hardest fighters, apparently - Kilmer was killed in the Second Battle of the Marne, after all - whereas the better-known ironists tended to be ambulance drivers or reporters. Faulkner tried to enter the war as a pilot in the RCAF, but it was over before he saw action, and he later signed on as a deck-hand on a Europe-bound freighter, intending to tour the battle sites. *The Sun Also Rises*, not mentioned here, had an observer-hero who witnesses brightflashes and cannot make love; but who is also on the inside, by no means a tourist. His war wound, the very thing that makes him a sexual observer, accredits his membership in that other society of solitaires who have fought and lived and know how to take Europe patiently.

Validating wounds are important, and not only in Hemingway. So are other kinds of humiliating impairment, like imprisonment. Four of the best American war fictions are about someone who has been captured, rendered inactive, and become the victim of aggression from his own side in the conflict: E. E. Cummings's *The Enormous Room*, Pound's *The Plan Cantos*, Jones's *From Here to Eternity* and Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Walsh does not mention *The Plan Cantos*, though he discusses *High Selwyn Mauberley* with some solemnity as a poem about the First World War. *American War Literature* is a good enough book, as far as it goes, but there are other stories to be told about its subject.

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Walsh's book covers its ground in a workmanlike way, but his narrative seems a trifle nerveless at times. A promising chapter treats *Men in Battle*, by Alvin Karpis, the American Marxist who fought in the Lincoln Brigade, alongside *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway's novel, wrote Bessie, "presented an unforgettable distortion of the meaning" of the

mention is made of other poems still in manuscript, such as some alarmingly purple ones sent to Robert Nichols or an important little farewell to protest in 1918. There are no references to Sassoon's published comments on individual poems; some hitherto unpublished notes are given in a vacuum (do they date from the 1950s, when he turned to Rome?).

Many of the familiar poems can be reinforced by cross-reference to the diaries: "Base Details", for instance, matches a bitter account of "guzzlers" at Rouen (and contrasts with Sherston's milder version). Sometimes a poem illuminates the diary. For instance, the entry for Easter Sunday 1916 records "Paradise, and God, and the promise of life" as the fruits of a woodland walk. Sherston doesn't clarify this (he was in the trenches that day, of course), but "The Last Meeting" describes the same walk and reveals that its intensity came from an encounter with David Thomas, newly dead but resurrected in nature. "Paradise" suggests that Thomas is the subject of "Invocation", where the diction seems just a little less hackneyed than it used to: "Come down from heaven and bring me in your eyes... stillness from the pools of Paradise. And that sends one back to the lament for Thomas, with its finely reticent memory of August 1915 when the two officers had "lived together for four weeks in Pembroke College in rooms where the previous occupant's name, Paradise, was written above the door". "Soldier David dressed in green" was the pilgrim's version of beauty and truth in 1916; by 1918, all soldiers, living and dead, had coalesced into "one soul... the tradition of suffering humanity...".

These diaries make fascinating reading and they add to Sassoon's stature; he never wrote the great poem that could have emerged from his 1918 vision, but the raw materials remain for other writers to use.

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## The comforts of bachelorhood

Humphrey Carpenter

CLYDE S. KILBY and MARJORIE LAMP MEAD (Editors)

Brothers and Friends: The diaries of Major Warren Hamilton Lewis 308pp. San Francisco: Harper and Row. \$15.95. 0 06 904575 X

Warren ("Wannie") Lewis was by far the nicest man in his brother C. S. Lewis's "Inklings" circle at Oxford — John Wain said he was simply one of the most likeable people he'd ever met — and he played a kind of Pooch to C.S.L.'s Christopher Robin, with very occasional reversal of those roles. He was the elder of the two, avowedly not an intellectual (though the books of seventeenth-century French history he took to writing late in life, at C.S.L.'s prompting, show a very able mind), and he had in much simpler, more direct forms many of the idiosyncrasies and traits of character that marked C.S.L. out from the common Oxford herd.

Take women, for instance. It is hard to make out quite what C.S.L.'s feelings about them really were. He spent most of his adult life sharing a house with Mrs Moore, a mother-figure who may or may not have originally been his mistress, and after her death he astonished his friends by marrying Jy Davidson, who seemed to encapsulate everything he was frightened of (she was an ex-Communist Jewish American divorcee). His writings suggest that he feared but was fascinated by women. His brother Wannie remained a bachelor all his life, and never seems to have had even a single affair, nor does he appear to have been even remotely

homosexual; but quite clearly he was in a muddle about women. He describes himself in the diaries as "palely shy" of them, yet on board ship he is delighted when a young lady offers to teach him how to iron his shirts (and is furious when an elderly bitch makes off with the iron and so breaks up the tête-à-tête), and at a bathing-place he admires the figure of a teenage girl. Then you turn the page and find this sort of thing:

The more one sees of women the more one realizes that they live in a world which is utterly different to, and largely repugnant to, the male — which indeed is sufficiently obvious from the fact that if a woman does not attract a man sexually, his feeling towards her varies from detestation to mild boredom.

In fact the diaries suggest that a lot of the Lewis oddities were simply inherited by C.S.L. and Wannie from their Ulster relations. Their father, a Belfast solicitor named Albert Lewis, was a pretty advanced specimen of amiable craziness, specializing in prejudices that were (as Tolkien once said of C.S.L.'s own preconceptions) impenetrable even by information. But apparently Albert was nothing compared to Uncle Gussie. Here is Wannie's description of one encounter between Gussie and nephew Jack (as C.S.L. was always called):

During the course of the afternoon, the Einstein theory cropped up — Uncle Gussie had of course anticipated Einstein — and he and [Jack] had a long metaphysical argument about the nature of the atom. I remember being startled by Uncle G's assertion (agreed to by J) that there was remarkably little matter in the world.

Wannie Lewis was the sort of plump, vast-trousered, bald, spectacled and moustached bachelor whom one would

expect to find teaching at a not very good prep school. Until his mid-thirties he was an army officer, a Captain in the RASC; he took early retirement in 1933, and apart from a brief spell back in uniform at the start of World War Two, which acquired him the rank of Major, he spent the rest of his life pottering between C.S.L.'s rooms in Magdalen and the Lewis-Moore household at the Kilns, beneath Shotover Hill on the edge of Oxford. Perhaps the most appealing thing about the diaries is the portrait they give of this very gentle way of life, the old-style bachelor existence which almost nobody seems to manage these days. And there is plenty of action when the whole household goes on holiday (Mrs Moore snapping at everyone from the back seat of the car, Wannie getting ticked off by Jack for criticizing her dogs being sick), or when Wannie and Jack escape from the Kilns for a walking tour in the Wye Valley, with results that resemble Laurel and Hardy more than George Borrow:

With the exception of some experiences on the war, I don't remember ever having a more damnable walk: we were in the narrow valley of the Afon Tareng, through which valley the river roared in our faces, bringing a heavy rain with it, with such force that I had to walk bent nearly double. . . . I wanted to turn and make to Liangurig and stop the night, catching a train from Llanidloes the next day, but I wouldn't hear of it, and I felt I should have lost my temper if I tried to argue. Just when I had decided that this would be my last walking tour . . . an ever to be blessed man with a saloon car pulled up. . . .

Wannie set out to write the diary after reading Saint-Simon, Boswell and Pepps, but he had no ambitions for

the project other than to please himself, and apparently never contemplated publication. In fact he shared much of his brother's literary ability, having the same facility at drawing a certain kind of comforting English scene:

I ate some sandwiches and then caught a 7.30 train for Bulford. . . . As we trundled out on to the open plain with its vast expanse of sky, the insignificance and incongruousness of this little train became more and more pronounced. . . . Whenever we stopped at wayside stations the sound of people in the next compartment sounded startlingly loud in the evening hush, which was only broken by the larks and the "baa" of folded sheep.

His picture of the Moore-Lewis household at the Kilns gradually deteriorating from idyl to hell-hole as Mrs Moore became old and mad is unforgettable, and he is also very good on his brother's marriage, which he describes with reticence, and even at times with plain jealousy of Jy Davidson for taking Jack away — his greatest fear, reiterated throughout the diary, is that Jack might predecease him; which indeed happened, and he had to spend the last decade of his life brotherless. Yet he is no Kilvert, let alone a Pepps or Saint-Simon; he lacked that slightly manic quality which seems necessary for the creation of a really great diary, and he was also curiously lazy about performing the role of Boswell to his brother. The dust-jacket of the book proclaims it to be "An Intimate Portrait of C. S. Lewis", but this is fairly misleading.

We get plenty of verbal snapshots of C.S.L., and a number of *obiter dicta*, but no attempt at a connected portrait, and, which is hard to forgive, only the most cursory accounts of Inklings evenings with Tolkien *et al.* usually no more than bare bones like this:

At present the book is available only in the US, which seems rather a pity.

## Shades of the vicarage

Violet Powell

DAVID GRUBB

Beneath the Vast Moon: An English Childhood

186pp. Anthony Mott Ltd, 50 Stile Hall Gardens, London W4 3BU. £8.95. 0 90774 614 4

The father and both the grandfathers of David Grubb were clergymen of the Church of England, and he grew up in large vicarages which had been designed for large families. He can remember a crisis in parish life, when during a particularly harrowing funeral, he and his sister were looked after by one of the maids, their governess being absent; there was also, besides the maid, a gardener whose wife worked in the house. To readers accustomed to contemporary vicars in today's small vicarages it may be startling to learn that an establishment on this scale existed as recently as the late 1940s.

Although clergymen's children must become familiar with the concept of death, the little Grubbs do seem to have had an "unusually" close life to hear from fellow-pupils again. Bideford Art College followed, and a talent for miniature painting (large canvases were too unwieldy) which won acceptance from the Royal Academy when the author was twenty. This scarcely details her, though; her thoughts were turning to writing. Early reading was dominated by Kipling, and Arthur Rackham's drawings, and such first attempts at writing by such sophisticated as Jeffrey Farnol and Warwick Deering. The mixture, here still, of scrupulous exactness and ingenious opacity makes it enjoyable to trace these influences, for those old enough to recognize the signs.

Thomas Callaghan recalls life on the road, sleeping in doss-houses and on bomb-sites, from managing a bed and breakfast hotel to busking. In *Trump's Chronicle* (217pp. Oxford Press Ltd. £7.50. 0 85362 201 9).

We talked of Bp Barnes, of the extraordinary difficulty of interesting the uneducated indifferent in religion: savage and primitive man and the common pagan mythology was a substitute for theology: bravery and panache.

Wannie Lewis bequeathed the diaries to Wheaton College, Illinois, and the founder of the collection which has, with one of his staff, been responsible for editing them for publication. Alas, editorial work has not always been done well: text and editorial matter sometimes become mixed up together, and there are unnecessary footnotes telling us who Gerard Manley Hopkins was, and who wrote *The Prelude*, while many minor Oxford figures and customs mentioned by the diarist go unexplained. It would have been nice, for example, if the reader had been told that "Victor", the hairdresser who spoke of "the great spiritual comfort the hymns bring him in Church on Sundays", was Victor Drew, proprietor of the High Street barber's shop which served generations of Oxford men (and children: I remember only too well the painful nip of his clippers on the back of my neck). And then there is Miss Wibelin, who appears in the diary as one of the lame ducks who gravitated to the Moore-Lewis house in the late 1920s. C.S.L. nicknamed her "Smudge"; the editors apparently know nothing about her, but I remember her as an Oxford music teacher thirty years later, who would ride a sombre black tricycle down Parks Road each weekday afternoon at four twenty-five, so punctually that watches could be set by her; and I could have told them how appropriate the nickname was.

The explanation for this failure lies in the introduction, where Dr Coote sketches his criteria for inclusion: For me, a gay poem is one that either deals with explicitly gay matters or describes an intense and loving relationship between two people of the same gender. . . . I have selected what I found most interesting, most pleasing. It follows that the book does not set out to be a canon of gay verse.

But the reader expects more from a Penguin anthology on such a subject than a purely personal selection, a kind of *Other Men's Other Men's Flowers*. There are places in this book — the Auden section, which contains only "Uncle Henry", is the most astonishing — where one looks vexedly at the pagination, convinced that a whole gathering must have been left out.

Leaving aside the monotonous pederastic epigrams of the Classical section of the anthology, Coote's criteria ignore a set of circumstances which are surely crucial to his task, for during the greater part of the period in which homosexuality has been widely identified as more than merely pederastic — that is, from the mid-nineteenth century — it has been socially difficult and legally impossible to write about it directly. If a homosexual way of writing could be identified it would of necessity embrace a wide variety of styles; but more than that, it would be predominantly indirect. Cryptic, camouflaged, sustained in coteries — the unspeakable love demands metaphor, and conscripts other ways of seeing to its purpose. Hence the heady confluence of religious and sexual devotion in Hopkins, or the way Housman enlists the traditional means of ballad, song and epigram to his obscure and painful private purpose. Like any repressed need, the need of the homosexual writers for self-expression on a matter essential to their lives achieves that expression through other means. One could even formulate a criterion antithetical to Coote's, which would be a homosexual poem was not one that dealt with "explicitly gay matters" but one in which, above all, gay matters could not be mentioned.

All this is, of course, absurdly schematic; attempting to polarize homosexual writing and some presumed norm of "heterosexual writing" in a way that is as psychologically crude as it is implausible. Heterosexual verse, too, deals with unspoken loves and unmet desires, and often works through expressive metaphorical evasions of central and private issues — among them, loneliness and desire. It is a common arrogance of homosexuals to assume the lion's share of suffering and singularity: homosexual verse, like Norman MacCaig's "Wild Oats", Tom Buchanan's "Letter From A Pariah", and "The Modernist" (Moir, MacDiarmid, MacCaig, Goodrich, Smith, Garloch, Morgan and after). There are others: Morgan has the whole of "Holy Willie's Prayer" by Alexander Scott just the sexy bit

## The unspeakable spoken

Alan Hollinghurst

STEPHEN COOTE (Editor)

The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse 410pp. Allen Lane. £8.95. 0 7139 1573 0

It could be a good idea to have an anthology of poems by and about homosexuals: it could bring together interesting curiosities and trace relationships between literary and social practice over a large time-span. It could also contain some wonderful poems. Stephen Coote's *Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse* starts promisingly with lines from Pope's *Mad* describing Achilles' vision of the dead Patroclus, rendered with all the grace and grandeur of that great translation. 345 pages later, after a few very great poems (fifteen of Shakespeare's sonnets and five sections from *In Memoriam* stand out) and a large amount of far inferior translations, we wind up with Michael Ruckmaker's "The Fairies Are Dancing All Over the World". This is not even an interesting curiosity; a formless dithyramb to homosexuality, it is as emotionally and politically naive as it is arid in execution. Something has gone wrong.

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of gays has had an enfeebling effect on their art. The Shakespeare and the Tennyson are not only the best poems in the book, they are in the mainstream of literary life.

Coote's position, though, adds to his disregard of the characteristically subtle means of homosexuals' art a strongly schematic sexual politics which is spelt out in his introduction:

There is still an enormous amount to do: more freedoms to be won, more people to educate, more lifestyles to develop, more maturities to achieve. . . . All the time we are subject to oppression we can and must band together, but in banding together we should avoid the lethal closets of the stereotype.

Though keen that homosexuals should be seen and know themselves as part of the whole and indivisible body of human "love", Coote's polemic is separatist: "Judy Grahn has fought against oppression" is the extent of his editorial support of her. But fighting is not the same as art: a large number of the poems here are, simply, dreadful.

Some of the dreadful ones also count as interesting curiosities: the lines from Edward Carpenter's "A Mightier than Mammon" — an earnest, endless psalm to "the love of men for each other" — has a mixture of Biblical affluence (reminiscent of Radclyffe Hall's prose) with demotic banality that is irresistibly comic:

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## Bawdy bedfellows

Gavin Ewart

ALEXANDER SCOTT (Editor)

Scottish Passion: An Anthology of Scottish Erotic Poetry

223pp. Robert Hale. £9.25. 0 7091 9884 1

ALAN BOLD

The Sexual Scot

151pp. Edinburgh: Paul Harris. £3.95.

0 904505 99 5

Scottish tape isn't the same as ordinary tape, and Scottish passion isn't the same as ordinary passion. An old English judgment has it that a surgical operation is needed to get a joke into the head of a Scotsman; but in fact Scottish love poetry shows both a sense of humour and a very pronounced leaning towards satire. In this it differs from most English erotic verse.

If one looks at Edwin Morgan's stimulating anthology *Scottish Sexual Verse*, one very quickly finds three poems that are in *Scottish Passion* too: Alan Jackson's "Edinburgh Scene", Norman MacCaig's "Wild Oats", Tom Buchanan's "Letter From A Pariah". There are others: Morgan has the whole of "Holy Willie's Prayer" by Alexander Scott just the sexy bit

Many spoke to him because he was fair — asked him to come and have a drink, and so forth; but still it was no satisfaction to him; for they did not give him that which he needed.

and yet which, in its mood of patient kindness and fraternity, is genuinely touching. On the other hand the sonnets from Edward James's *Carmine Amica* — "Two full carved rubies were his urgent lips"; "I am the bugle for the mouth of love", etc — are so self-evidently atrocious that nothing justifies their excavation.

A further problem constitutional to a book of this kind — a problem which contributes to Coote's tendency to select those explicit works in which creative metaphor has more or less been dropped — is that the subtleties of homosexual persuasion in the *oeuvre* of any particular writer may only become apparent over a large span.

Laurence Housman has explained his conviction that his brother wished the unambiguous poems published posthumously in *More Poems* and *Additional Poems* to be seen as morally supportive for "lads" in trouble, an exemplary coming out from beyond the grave. Even so, few of those poems — such as the blatant "Oh who is that young sinner with the handcuffs on his wrist?" included here — approach the lacerated concision of the work in A

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*Shropshire Lad* and the volume named, with a morbidly relished self-suppression, *Last Poems*. In particular *A Shropshire Lad*, brought on in part by Housman's excited reaction to the Wilde trial, has found success in camouflage, a vastly popular middle-class book centring on the frustrated love of men. The reading of the world collection discloses this covert spiritual autobiography, its private topography laden with feeling and meaning, its nexus of adolescent experience which demands a fictional world, a ghostly fable of a shape, in which to expand and assert itself. A *Shropshire Lad* conceals its urgent need to tell a story by adopting a mode of static lyrical introspection, the technique, indeed, of a great song-cycle such as *Die Winterreise*. The anthology has always been the home of the lyric — and it is inevitable that these fictional worlds, which with clear and informed thought entirely give themselves away, will elude the anthologist's jackdaw eye. Something essential that homosexual poets do — and Auden's ignored poems afford a far more richly coded private world — cannot be put in a book of this kind.

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munion", when there is "Felix Randal" or "Harry Ploughman", which so lovingly and palpably assembles, limb by limb, its physically magnificent subject, and even the subversive "Epithalamion" which sets out to hymn a marriage but becomes so diverted, by describing "boys from the town" bathing in a stream that it breaks down altogether? Why the tawdry Nineties-ish "To My Friend" and "Anteus: A Fragment" from Wilfred Owen, and not the other fragment, "I saw his round mouth's crimson deepen as it fell", and "Has Your Soul Sipped?", in which the poet's feeling truly becomes "part of the whole and indivisible body of human love"? Thom Gunn's "Fever" and "Modes of Pleasure" are dull pieces when compared with his Auden-esque and profoundly enigmatic "From the Highest Camp", a sonnet which intimates more about homosexual experience than tens of pages of the more modern stuff here. But then these poems have been chosen because "Thom Gunn has described as no other the atmosphere of a gay bar"; and work from *Passages of Joy* has not been included. All these omitted poems are not only better than the ones included, they would have helped to rectify the impression of emotional and artistic immaturity that much of the book disappointingly gives off. (The set of Imericks, crinnally anonymous, must be the most puerile ever published. Auden wrote some good homosexual Imericks.)

The *Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse* is a book compiled with good faith, and it may cheer gay "lads" and "lasses" (it has a substantial Lesbian content, conscripting fine poems by Emily Dickinson) — but from a literary point of view it is irredeemably flawed. It has terrible translations in it, in particular those by the editor, who makes objectionably free with the words "queer", "queen" and "faggot"; and those by Sydney Oswald, who identifies syntactical with sexual inversion to a harrowing degree; there is a startling version too of Horace, *Odes*, IV, 1, "Adapted from an 'imitation' by Alexander Pope". Stephen Coote's judgments in the introduction repeatedly give him away: Akerley's (interesting curiosity) "After the Blitz, 1941" is described as "one of the greatest of gay love poems precisely because it is a love poem first and a gay poem second". In Cavafy's work "Seediness redeemed by remembered joy makes these works poems of an international stature." Neither of these statements approaches being a literary judgment. Seediness redeemed by remembered joy can do good number of things, but it never yet gave anything stature, international or otherwise.

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## The burden of reticence

Anne Duchêne

ROSEMARY SUTCLIFF

Blue Remembered Hills: A Recollection

141pp. Bodley Head. £6.50. 0 370 30940 5

Autobiography, however much one may try to modify the fact, is essentially the raising of a monument to oneself: an impulse which society may long have acknowledged as legitimate and healthy, but which still runs counter to inherited traditions of modesty and reticence. Rosemary Sutcliff, an honourable retailer and teller of romance and epic, is the daughter of a naval officer, and a mother who taught her never to cry, always to conceal the fox beneath her cloak. Moreover, she was their only child, and physically handicapped. Deciding to record her early life — from infancy to the acceptance of her first book, in her early twenties — risks flouting the disciplines ingrained in her. It also means that we, the public, are invited to intrude on private griefs, and joys, without being fully admitted to more than one or two of them.

At most points where the story might be deemed remarkable, Miss Sutcliff's training usually denies its singularity. She was a victim of Still's Disease, a form of infantile arthritis which attacks the very young and burns itself out, leaving the small host-body subject to operations, spells in hospital, painful traction and treatments, and so on, while as much as possible is done to bring the afflicted members back into the true. Like all handicapped children, Miss Sutcliff says, she accepted these limitations: life wells up to fill whatever circumference it is allowed. Comparisons and complications only set in later.

Later, indeed, since she was, as she just allows herself to stress, as much prone to falling in love as those with limbs of more average efficiency — a blissful but doomed marriage of the mind, just after the war, could find no consequence then (could it more easily now?) because of the discrepancies of

the flesh, or, in her case, more strictly of the flesh and the bone. Miss Sutcliff also allows herself the thought that in a Moslem society she might have been the first wife, *prima inter pares*, and perfectly content to let others administer other comforts. This is the only point where feelings are strong enough to threaten the book's smooth surface; but it is not her intention to be contentious, and they are put down again — welcomed, even, as teaching her about feelings she could use later in her books.

Other limitations are accepted just as stoically. She and her mother lived in boarding-houses or rented cottages while her father was at sea, in naval quarters (often very pleasant ones, in Malta, Sheerness, Chatham) when he had a shore job. They finally settled in Devonshire, not very long before her father — seemingly a modest, moderate, unwelcome man — emerged from retirement to command war-time convoys. Some younger readers may marvel at the tenacity with which the tiny family unit held — how many alibis there would be nowadays for its collapse! — but the texture of her disparate parents' relationship is never discussed.

Nor — a greater gap — is her mother, who seems likely from the illustrations, to have been as vividly lovely and changeable as her daughter says, but who remains a vast, unremembered, unassuaged presence in the background — trying to force her daughter to walk, or to read, delighting her, chafing her. One tries to imagine how life must have been, trailing after a nomadic husband with the accompanying anguish of a handicapped child, for a woman as volatile. "Volatile" is a polite word; her daughter suggests her mother's violent alternations of mood would nowadays be classified as manic-depressive, and the subject is virtually dismissed as early as page 14:

She was wonderful, no mother could have been more wonderful. But ever after, she demanded that I should not forget it, nor cease to be grateful, nor hold an opinion different from her own, nor even, as I grew older, feel the need for any companionship but hers. If this seems a terrible thing

to write, I can argue only that it is the truth, and if I left it comfortably unwritten, I could not give a true picture of our relationship, which was a very close one, almost as close at times as she thought it was, and as she would have liked it to be. But it was never, after the very early years, an easy one. Very few of the worthwhile things in this world are all that easy.

There grinds the authentic animosity which can exist between mother and daughter! — but the punches are pliously pulled, as pre-war convention demanded, and the "true picture of



# Believing the impossible

Jasper Griffin

PAUL VEYNE

Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes? Essai sur l'imagination constituante  
163pp. Paris: Seuil. 55fr.  
2 02 006367 0

Did the Greeks believe in their myths? The question is a disconcerting one. As long as Greco-Roman antiquity lasted, the myths were the great subject of art and poetry, ubiquitous in rhetoric, pervasive in every cultured activity. Yet can men like Thucydides and Aristotle, Callimachus and Virgil, really have believed in Hercules and Hecuba, Minotaur and metamorphoses? If they did not, what were they doing when they wrote about them?

Paul Veyne became well known outside France with his massive book *Le Pain et le cirque* (1976). It combined wide erudition with some sharp insights into the psychology and the working of munificence and conspicuous expenditure, from Periclean Athens, to the late Roman Empire: at one psychological extreme spectacular acts of aristocratic pride, at the other a systematic tax on wealth. The attitudes of the recipients were not

neglected, especially the need for subjects to feel that their masters really were generous and benevolent. His present book has some kinship with his sprightly theoretical work *Comment on écrit l'histoire* (1971: abridged version, 1978); and he declares that its aim was to provoke reflection on the way our conception of truth is built up and changes over the centuries. It is concerned with the myths about the heroes, not with the cosmogonies and other purely divine stories.

The Greeks were of course aware from an early date that myths were a special form of story. Plato likes to contrast *muthos*, the mythical mode suitable for poets, children, old women, and other non-Platonic persons, with *logos*, proper rational argument. Herodotus says that the Sorian despot Polycrates, a hundred years before his own time, was "the first Greek we know of who set out to rule the sea, except for Minos and anybody else who may have done it earlier; at least Polycrates was the first of what is called the race of men". That is to say, Minos, lord of the labyrinth and stepfather of the Minotaur, belonged in a different category separate from "men" in the ordinary sense. It is true that Herodotus does not apply that distinction consistently, but in the fourth century he was normal for writers of universal history

to begin at the end of the mythical period, and the mythographer Palaeophatus protests against the tendency of contemporary educated people simply to disbelieve the myths altogether. The great Alexandrian savant Eratosthenes derided those who started they ought to track down the leather-worker who made the bag which held the winds; he meant that it was futile to treat as raw material for a factual investigation an account which included obviously fabulous elements. Cultured men with yachts still pursue Odysseus' glimmering wake round the Mediterranean, disregarding Eratosthenes' sound advice.

It is odd, in the face of all this, that Veyne insists on repeating that in antiquity nobody ever disbelieved in the myths about heroes. In his cosmogonies stories being completely rejected. Some people did disbelieve them. It is, however, true that most ancient writers took a different line. From the fifth century onwards, historians and others tried to reconcile the heroic myths with the world of ordinary experience and of history. Thucydides opened his History with a brilliant rationalizing account of early Greece, teasing out of the myths a story of economic development and the rise of naval power. This time Minos appears not as a saga-figure, alien to real history (Herodotus), nor as the owner of a Minotaur and labyrinth (the myth), but as a powerful ruler who built a fleet to put down piracy and ensure that his island subjects paid their taxes. That is to say, he is in principle historic; and when, to echo Sherlock Holmes, we have excluded everything that is impossible, what is left must be the truth.

That Holmesian argument does indeed implicitly or explicitly underlie a great deal of ancient writing on early history and mythology. Minos and Theseus existed all right, but obviously the Minotaur has to be rationalized away. The myth said that Actaeon was turned into a stag and devoured by his own hounds: the truth no doubt was that he was so immoderately keen on hunting that he allowed the expense of his hounds to "eat him up". The myth said that Niobe wept for her children's death until she was turned to stone: the truth was that she had a statue of herself put up by her grave.

The Trojan War took place, but not every detail in Homer is to be relied on. Thucydides allows himself a dry aside about the Homeric Cyclops speaking of the early history of Sicily, he says: "The oldest inhabitants of one part of the island are said to have been the Cyclopes. Where they came from, or where they went to, I can't say; I must leave my readers with what the poets say about them, and what individuals choose to believe." And so on.

The style is brilliant and exhilarating: Veyne has a flair for the epigram. The reader still wonders how important, and how serious, all this is meant to be. It may be unimportant to observe that when he writes "real" history Veyne is obliged to proceed in a very different spirit: in *Le Pain et le cirque* he gives a lively critique of Marxist and functionalist theories as being wrong ("the history of every society, to this day, has never been one

of class struggle, but of a struggle of the myths was "different": things happened then which do not happen now. Obviously it will not be easy to tell how far this attitude conceals, or fails to conceal, scepticism about the truth of the stories. Veyne's treatment of all this is urbane and amusing. He deals well with the perplexities of Pausanias, writer of a tourist's guide to Greece, who sometimes records local myths without comment, sometimes rationalizes them, occasionally is moved to protest—and sometimes remains elaborately inscrutable. His point is that the ancients both did and did not believe in the heroic myths; rather than being a contradiction, this is like having alternative "programmes" to which they could tune in at different times. Novels and plays are "true" for us, while we are engrossed in them: in Veyne's phrase, they are "magic carpets to another truth". The same person can invoke, in different contexts, both orthodox medicine and homeopathy; one can "disbelieve" in ghosts and still be capable of being frightened of them; despite indications, a husband can "not know" of his wife's infidelity.

Behind all this lies the general point that there is in fact no one reality. History is "a shifting polygon of small forces constantly rearranging themselves at random"; as the future can never be predicted, so retrospective explanations of the past depend on our presuppositions and are "illusions". History itself is constantly inventive and does not lead the reasonable life of a safe small investor. There is in fact no distinction in principle between truth and fiction: "la vérité est le nom que nous donnons à nos options", and indeed "if anything deserves the name of ideology, it is la vérité". We construct a reality for ourselves by our choices, and "the imaginary is the reality of other people". A forger is thus only "a man who has mistaken his century", "a fish who has got into the wrong bowl: his scientific imagination follows methods which are no longer on the programme". In the end "nothing exists at any moment save what the imagination has built into its palaces", and they are consensually changing: what can be said of those palaces is not that they are *true*, but that they are more or less *interesting*.

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## Feeding off scraps

J. H. C. Leach

R. L. HUNTER (Editor)

Eubolus: The Fragments  
260pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£30.  
0 521 24436 6

*Defuncta membra poetarum*: the words inevitably come to one's mind as one studies this scholarly commentary on the pitiful excerpts which are all that now remain of the Greek Middle Comedy dramatist Eubolus (*floruit* c. 370 bc). The bare numbers tell the story: Eubolus seems to have composed 104 plays, of which 57 titles survive. And from this corpus R. L. Hunter, following Kock's numeration, has been able to assemble scarcely 150 fragments (a few of them almost certainly spurious or properly to be ascribed to other authors of the same name). Nor can it be said that the fragments themselves are especially illuminating: preserved as the most paltry in the works of comedy such as Pollux or Photius, or, especially, in the *Deipnosophistai* of Athenaeus, the scraps naturally relate heavily to the special interests—in the case of the last-named was food. Fragment 57

—unusually long at six lines—is one of the major sources for the names of ancient dice-throwers, but Hunter is, perhaps, unduly overwrought in calling it a "virtuoso piece of verification", since the comic trimeter is a remarkably amenable and flexible medium and the individual words for the throws present no intractable difficulty for inclusion in a list. (It is interesting that the great scholar Meineke thought that Eubolus wrote in a relatively elevated style, finding "orations supra socum surgentis gravitationem". Dr Hunter properly points out that this is only partially confirmed by statistics, but the impression is there, nevertheless.)

Greek Middle Comedy—broadly speaking, the comedy of the central part of the fourth century bc—has not survived the ravages of time at all well; as Hunter well puts it, "the evidence from which an adequate account of Attic Comedy between the *Plutus* of Aristophanes and the *Dyscolus* of Menander could be written does not exist." Unless and until the rubbish dumps of the Fayum throw up a papyrus such as gave us the *Dyscolus* itself, the *Athenaloon*, *Pollux*, the poems of Bacchylides and much more, Middle Comedy's 580 extant titles—out of perhaps 900 or more plays—will have to remain shadows without

substance. Around the fragments of Eubolus (why was he chosen for this annotated edition?) Hunter has raised a careful edifice of learning which shows complete command of the monuments, and of the primary and secondary source material; but even he can do no more than cast a furtive and intermittent light on the route by which the mordant and often fantastic political comedy of Aristophanes gradually became transmuted into the social comedy of Menander ("O Menander and Lili! Which of you imitated the other?" once famously asked that other Aristophanes, the grammarian of Byzantium). The value of this book is enhanced both by the thorough introduction and by the indexes, which include an *Index verborum*. It is printed with exemplary attention to detail by the Cambridge University Press.

Recently published in Oxford Classical Texts is *Plotini Opera III: Epistolae*, edited by Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzler (373pp. Oxford University Press. £11.50. 0 19 814591 8). It retains the apparatus of both textual and of philosophical sources, of their major critical editions, and of the *Enneades* of Plotinus, with lists of editorial revisions made since the two preceding OCT volumes

## The immortal Cry

Colin Greenland

MANUEL MAUJICA LAINEZ

*The Wandering Unicorn*  
Translated by Mary Fitton  
320pp. Chatto and Windus / Hogarth Press.  
£8.50 (paperback, £4.50).  
0 7011 2668 X

Melusine is a fairy; but not, you understand, "a nursery-tale fairy; malign fate has seen to that". Cursed by her mother after a domestic disagreement, she developed the tail of a serpent and the wings of a bat, with evidently of another order of architecture from the evanescent "palaces of imagination" envisaged in the present work.

More disturbing are some worries about this book itself. "Truth being plural", we read, the denial by Fairission of the reality of Auschwitz was not a falsehood: it was "a mythical truth", the only mistake being to treat it as if it were historical; thus Fairission was led into "operations which, in the jargon of historians in controversy, are called falsifications of historical truth". Since there is in reality nothing which is either true or false ("It feels funny at first, but one soon gets used to it"), the Nazis claimed to be right, too: "we could have retorted that they were wrong, but what would have been the use? They were not on the same wavelength; and it is merely Platonic to accuse an earthquake of untruthfulness." This seems to go at once too far and not far enough. Too far, in that the study of history, on these terms, seems no more than a sterile aestheticism; not far enough, since as "there is no *vérité des choses*", and nothing objective distinguishes truth from fiction, it is hard to see why Fairission is allowed only a *mythical* truth: what significance can the distinction have? But if it has none, what becomes of history, and of historians? It does strike the reader as positively droll to find Veyne quoting with approval the dictum that "facts do not exist" and adding punctiliously "the words belong to Nietzsche, not to Max Weber". Despite everything, a scholar cannot shake off the habit of making small factual points; the text may be sentenced to death, but the footnotes are immortal.

Veyne himself observes that "we are all carried away by our own rhetoric". The passages I have just quoted seem to me a striking example of the truth of that generalization. This rhetorical and brilliant book will stand, I fancy, to its author's more serious works as the satyr-play stood to the tragedies of the little playwright; and of the various forms of the drama, the satyr-play is the one with which many readers find it hardest to be at home.

The bare bones of *The Queen's Gambit* sound familiar enough. The heroine, Beth, is orphaned at the age of eight. A not especially attractive child, she nevertheless escapes from the institutional life of the Methuen Home by getting herself adopted. Moving into womanhood, she confronts the challenges of alcohol, sex, and an invitingly, tranquillizing. She eventually wins an assured place in a male-dominated world, having journeyed from rags (not really) to riches (not

everybody else since Henry James. One remark is worth noting here: "We neither feel the burden of archaeology nor hear the music of nostalgia, but live out the fate of his people as though it were our own." *The Wandering Unicorn* is historical romance, and the balance is nicely judged. Lainez is neither using his immortal narrator as a way of getting at history directly, nor is he simply choosing historical remoteness as an excuse for the whimsical and picturesque. In the world he describes, the forces of history and romance are alive and co-extensive. When two of the protagonists, Aiol and Mercator, show little surprise at being rescued by blatant supernatural intervention, Melusine explains their imperturbability: they are "men of the Middle Ages, schooled by history and romance to expect and accept the inexplicable". She adds, "No one does nowadays, and look at the state we're in." A hermit in the forest of Lussac has a fairy dwarf who helps with the housework; Aiol's sister is possessed by a devil in the form of a black fog; Ozil, Aiol's father, bears a lance made from the horn of a unicorn, seven feet long. This is as much South American "magical realism" as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (and written at the same time), but shifted back to a past when "the unpredictable waited for the predictable". In twelfth-century France reality was understood to be wholly permeated by magic, and by the divine. There were angels as well as fairies. There is one resident in the keep of Melusine's castle at Lusignan, but celestial etiquette forbids her to have any dealings with him.

The figure of Melusine herself, daughter of a witch and a Scottish king, is Lainez's principal symbol of magic and realism inextricably combined. She involves herself in mundane affairs, even becoming incarnate again

## Bound to the board

Colin Russ

WALTER TEVIS

*The Queen's Gambit*  
260pp. Heinemann. £7.95.  
0 434 76655 0

What sets Walter Tevis's novel quite apart from the run-of-the-mill tales suggested by this outline is the fact that his Cinderella is also a prodigy. From the moment when Beth encounters Mr Shalbel, the inventor of the Home, poring over his chessboard, the course of her life is decided. She rapidly outgrows his initially reluctant tuition in the game, and it becomes the centre of her existence as her marvellous talent for it unfolds. The adult, masculine world to be conquered is that of "society dapper" Russian grandmasters. Like the author's first novel, *The Hustler*, the story explores the workings of an inexplicable and randomly occurring gift.

Thus *The Queen's Gambit* may be described as a special kind of psychological thriller. The author has undertaken the depiction of the interior of a chessplayer's mind: We repeatedly eavesdrop on Beth as she plays; the mental, emotional and physical tensions of top class chess are evoked magnificently. In particular, the obsessive quality of the chessplayer's allegiance to his craft is authoritatively conveyed (comparison with Nabokov's *The Defence* is not exaggerated). Beth is indifferent to dolls, and, perhaps, and one at the chessboard. This spring morning outdoors was all right, but this was

what she loved." Her ascent to fame takes her to Mexico City, Paris and Moscow, but local colour is overlaid with the black and white configurations of chessmen. Beth's true and unchanging environment is the enclosed world of chess with its "geometrical rococo" and "pleasant ballet", its "shifting architecture of pawns", and the remorselessness of the clock ticking beside the board. Nevertheless, life outside the game—the intensity of Beth's chess experience makes one hesitate to say "real" life—has to go on, and Beth needs and gets the support of two excellently realized characters standing outside her destined arena and surveying it with wonder: her adoptive mother, and a black opium addict, who also makes it in the world. Beth's emotional link with old Shalbel, too, is profound if muted, and survives his death, as the novel's close, set in a Moscow park,

implies: About halfway down the first row of concrete tables an old man was sitting alone with the pieces set up in front of him. He was in his sixties and wore the usual grey cap and grey cotton shirt with the sleeves rolled up. When she stopped at his table he looked at her inquisitively, but there was no recognition on his face. She sat behind the black pieces, and said carefully in Russian, "Would you like to play chess?"

The authority of *The Queen's Gambit* derives from Walter Tevis's technical and historical knowledge of chess, yet his expertise is consistently disciplined by his narrative: his own "strategy and tactics" are immaculate. Familiarity with chess is not needed in order to enjoy his book, though aficionados will delight in its evocation of their esoteric freemasonry.

## Trials of the simple man

Michael Hofmann

JOSEPH ROTH

*Job: The story of a simple man*  
Translated by Dorothy Thompson  
238pp. Chatto and Windus / Hogarth Press. £7.95 (paperback, £3.95).  
0 7011 3907 2

*Job: Roman eines einfachen Mannes* was first published in 1930, and a translation of it by Dorothy Thompson appeared three years later. After half a century, this has been reissued, and under the melancholy copyright of The Overlook Press. It is a pleasure to welcome its return to print in English.

The virtues of *Job* are more its author's than of the book itself. It is a transitional novel, following what has been called the aggressive pessimism of Joseph Roth's first five books. In it, Joseph Roth is typified by melody and colour; bitter jokes by miracles; contemporary satire by legend. Roth dolls, and, perhaps, and one at the chessboard. This spring morning outdoors was all right, but this was

in it. Certainly, it does not measure up to his best work, *The Radetsky March*, a family epic of great density and beauty—an Austrian *Buddenbrooks* or the untranslatable *Die Kapuzinergruft*, where the theme of *Job*, the Jew from the remote provinces, and his musically gifted son, is used as a sub-plot.

All Roth's novels are about simple men. This one is about Mendel Singer, "an entirely commonplace Jew", a poor Bible-teacher in Zucknow in Russia. His troubles begin with the birth of his fourth child, Menuchim, who is deformed and epileptic. After some years, the family emigrate to America without the typical and proper for a while until their son Shemariah is killed, fighting the Germans in France. Mendel's wife dies of grief after a bleakly unforgettable scene.

In Deborah's countenance not a feature changed. Her two hands tore now one, now the other, at her hair. Her hands were like pale, fleshy, five-toed animals, feeding themselves on hair. Then Singer's daughter is confined to an asylum, and he hears that his

## Death of the Dream

David Montrose

RICHARD BRAUTIGAN

*So The Wind Won't Blow It All Away*  
131pp. Cape. £6.95.  
0 224 02098 6

In literature at least, the American Dream has, over the decades, undergone a gradual transformation. At one time striving towards a golden future, its believers now more often look back sadly at a past that is irrecoverable except in memory. Certainly, this is true of Richard Brautigan's latest novel, where the wishfulness that characteristically informs this author's work has deepened into melancholy, driving out most traces of his idiosyncratic humour. We have here no fantasy, few bizarre metaphors, no eccentric chapter headings.

Writing in 1979, the narrator—Brautigan himself or someone very like him—preserves in print recollections of a 1940s childhood for reasons summarized in the novel's leitmotif: So the Wind Won't Blow It All Away.

Dust... American... Dust. Two memories are of particular significance. One is a vivid mental snapshot of a fat, middle-aged husband and wife fishing at the local pond on a summer evening in 1947. They have brought their living room furniture with them: not only a couch to fish from, but an easy chair, end tables, a clock, framed pictures. For the narrator, the scene represents a lost America.

I sat there watching their living room shining out of the dark beside the pond. It looked like a fairy tale functioning happily in the post-World War II gothic of America before television crippled the imagination of America and turned people indoors and away from living out their own fantasies with dignity.

The second memory, revealed gradually, concerns the narrator's fateful decision one day to buy shells for his 22 rifle. Instead of a hamburger in the restaurant next to the gunshop, a short while later, on February 17, 1948 (a date inscribed on the mind), he kills his best friend, David, in a shooting accident. Slightly unhinged by the tragedy, the narrator for a time becomes (in the novel's only sustained comic episode) obsessed with hamburgers. Believing that, as atonement for having made the wrong choice, he must find out everything about them. Searching for knowledge, he scours books, interviews short-order cooks and butchers. The narrator's childhood ended with David's death: His loss of innocence is directly equated with America's. He remembers, on the day of the accident, standing with his rifle before a filling

station, waiting for David to arrive. Nobody paid any attention to him:

Needless to say, America has changed from those days of 1948. If you saw a twelve-year-old kid with a rifle standing in front of a filling station today, you'd call out the National Guard and probably with good provocation. The kid would be standing in the middle of a pile of

So *The Wind Won't Blow It All Away* sees the final demise of Brautigan's one-time optimism about the possibilities of life in contemporary America. It was, of course, always a qualified optimism. In the early novels—*A Confederate General from Big Sur*, *Trouble in Paradise*, *In Watermelon Sugar*, and *The Abolition*—which were suffused with the hippie ideals of the period, his individualistic characters had to seek their America outside the rat-race, usually in pastoral simplicity. Still, there was at least an America to be sought. Seven years (and three novels) later, with *Dreaming of Babylon*, the area of possibility shrank to the size of his hero's head: he could realize the good life—money, fame, beautiful women—only through the fantasy movies of his imagination. In the novel and the present and future, America is located in an ever-receding stock of memories. The narrator's retrospective dream is to buy the hamburger instead of the shells, thereby extending the idyllic days of childhood. He shuns the here and now. Apart from the two examples quoted, nothing is said about the bad news. Clearly, their awfulness is so self-evident as to make further statement unnecessary.

Since his first three (and most interesting) novels, Brautigan's work has been increasingly weak on ideas. *So The Wind Won't Blow It All Away* reverses the process: though essentially a straightforward lament, it still represents the author's most substantial novel since *In Watermelon Sugar*, even if the untypical tone does make it a less purely enjoyable experience than most of his intervening titles. Potentially, the material is corny in the extreme, but Brautigan handles it well. In the main, he is content to tell a plain tale plainly: the style, slips, briefly, only once. Brautigan is especially adept at evoking the everyday magic of childhood: when venturing into an unfamiliar part of the neighbourhood is a real exploit and the funerals leaving the undertaker's next door are a fascinating spectacle. The novel is no stretch of the imagination, a profound or major work. Nevertheless, Brautigan's departure from his customary mode might lead to greater things. After a run of variously disappointing books culminating in *The Tokyo-Montana Express*, a rag-bag of brief sketches, revitalization is more likely in new fields than the well-ploughed furrow.

writes superb catalogues of attrition or delusion, using pitiless similes and luminously simple description. The passage of time and the process of aging are abbreviated to a radical loss—the one morning, for instance, when sexual relations between Mendel Singer and his wife abruptly cease. From their humble, fairy-tale beginnings, each one of his books, unmistakably individual images of sorrow made visible:

It still snowed a little—slow, lazy, damp flakes. The Jews, with open umbrellas waving over their heads, began their promenade up and down. More and more came. They walked in the middle of the street, the last white scraps of snow melted under their feet; if looked as though they had to walk up and down by order of the authorities, until the snow had entirely disappeared.

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## Manufacturing soap

J. K. L. Walker

WILLIAM SMETHURST

*Jennifer's Friends*  
223pp. Methuen. £7.95.  
0 413 50610 X

To a generation grown to manhood in the shadow of *The Archers*, *Jennifer's Friends*, the eponymous radio soap opera of William Smethurst's deftly professional first novel, will hold few terrors. Brainchild of the earnest Windmiller, shopkeeper-turned-scriptwriter, Radio East Mercia's daily serial may, according to some, be "sugary, sickly, cloying, insufferable, banal" ("Yes, well, the *Guardian* can piss off", says Tom Viner, the show's producer, late artistic director of *The People's Palace*) but it is networked on twenty-five local radio stations, not to mention Radio Free Hamburg. This never-never England of Hanford and its characters - crusty old Colonel Snipe at the Hall, with its entourage of Denzil Troon, Pixie Parker and Torrington; Sampson Grange, the Old People's Home; the Medical Centre with breezy District Nurse Jennifer and Doctor Hamilton; and the housing estate, with the March family and the Wetherbys at 46 The Crescent - twitches cosily on the writer's life-support machine.

Smethurst performs a cool juggling act with the fortunes of Hanford's

inhabitants and those of their creators, interweaving scenes from the current episodes of *Jennifer's Friends* with others revealing their genesis. Sometimes characters from the serial trace a notably eccentric orbit as the scriptwriters sabotage one another's episodes. The Autumn Leaves Cycling Club has been called into existence, the unhappy Windmiller furiously asserts, to provide fresh air and exercise for the inhabitants of Sampson Grange, not for his colleague Brian Newman lewdly to clothe the elderly Mrs Pumpsaint in shorts.

The actors endure such excitements and the brutal urgings of their director, the egregious silver-necklaced Geraint Lewis (whose cherished Fuck-Off Fund guarantees him job-mobility) according to age and temperament. A few, like pretty young Sarah Wilmot, are on the way up; most, like Blanche Lawford, bearer of plastic bags that clank, are on the way down; all dread the Black Spot, the writing-out, the one-way trip to Scarborough awaiting their fictional counterparts. Over all of them - cast, writers, producer - hovers the hawkish Programme Director, Sonia Clifford, and her sexually drained lover, Neville Young, ready to perform major butchery on the programme at the first sign of flagging ratings. Ominously, they introduce a civil service "adviser", Purselove, to ensure a correct welfare-state flavour to the programme as a *quid pro quo* for a dip into government funds. The already implausible Cindy Skeabost,

ravaged town girl come burrowing back to Hanford's warm roots, teeters towards the edge of nihilism as Sonia and Purselove strive to turn her a chic shade of black.

At a different level, Tom Viner, the novel's controlling consciousness, is also correct. A resigned liberal sceptic, he wisely appreciates that the struggle to attain the Good should be peaceful and non-violent. *Jennifer's Friends* may be a sell-out but it is not some irrevocable descent into the moral abyss; the next job will be better; meanwhile professionalism demands that the product be as good as you can make it. No heroics in one's career, and similarly no romanticism in one's love-life. Such a low-key response is convincing enough but threatens dullness.

The strength of the novel - and perhaps its *raison d'être* - lies in its horribly convincing descriptions of soap-opera manufacture. This, no doubt, is as it should be, for Smethurst, it appears, has written over two hundred scripts for *The Archers*, besides editing the programme - a daunting *curriculum vitae* which must account for his novel's swift pace and skillful construction. *Jennifer's Friends* is undoubtedly a well-made comedy, but entertaining though it is, one is left in the end with a sense of opportunities missed. Given such a plump and sitting target, Smethurst might have gone for the kill rather than allowing his quarry to flap nonchalantly away.

## Getting into pictures

Lewis Jones

MACDONALD HARRIS

*Screenplay*  
249pp. Cape. £7.95.  
0 224 02096 X

*Screenplay* has for epigraph those lines in *Ode on a Grecian Urn* which console the eternally frustrated "Bold Lover" with the thought that his love, and the beauty of his beloved, are also eternal. Keats is, of course, expressing desire rather than giving advice (just as the line "More happy love more happy, happy love" is surely one of the most lugubrious in literature), but MacDonald Harris takes him at his word and imagines the "unenviable position of such a lover: he questions the identification of life with art undoing the marriage of truth and beauty and setting them at odds with one another, as the poet did in *Lamia*. In place of the idyllic world of the urn, the novel offers one which now seems equally remote and innocent: that of the Hollywood silent film.

Its hero, Alys, is an aesthete in the mould of des Esseintes. Born in 1950 in Los Angeles, he is heir to the most basic and the most refined benefits of civilization: his family has for generations owned a patent on the flush lavatory, and he grows up in a mansion full of pictures, books and music. He is an only child, and his parents are too absorbed in one another to pay him much attention. They seem to him "eternally young", an impression which is fixed when they die in a car crash on his eighteenth birthday. He dedicates himself to the study of baroque music and the literature of "eccentrics, recluses and decadents" and, as "a kind of vulgar relaxation", watches silent films, slightly envious of their simplicity. He has a girlfriend but cannot bring himself to go to bed with her because she knows more about music than he does. Instead, he masturbates in a room full of mirrors.

Alys's guide through the looking-glass appears one day in the shape of a very old man who looks rather like Hummel. His name is Julius Nesselrode, and he claims to be a famous film producer. Amused and intrigued by Nesselrode's offer to get him "into pictures", Alys goes with him to a derelict cinema, where hand in hand they pass through the screen. Emerging from the building's back door, Alys discovers that they are in the LA of sixty years ago: cleaner,

newer and in black and white. Nesselrode takes him to a film set, where he is given a small part to play and falls in love with Moira Silver, an actress who resembles his mother.

On his return from this expedition, Alys is contacted by a mysterious man called Ziff, who wears silver trousseurs and says that he is his guardian angel. Ziff warns him against returning through the screen and explains that "Our belief in the reality of art... is in itself a form of mental illness." But Alys, besotted by Moira, ignores his advice.

Back in the Twenties, Alys becomes a successful actor - the film-making is brilliantly described - but his life between films is spent either in Keatsian swoons ("or as though the aesthetes' needle, slipping painlessly into a vein, had infused me

## Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

JACK FULLER

*Convergences*  
334pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £7.95.  
0 340 28127 7

Back in 1971 Richard Harper ran a beautiful CIA operation in Tokyo, using a staff sergeant in the US Army to feed fake information to a top Russian agent. Now, seven years later, the operation seems to be repeating itself of its own accord. Impressive, muted opening sets up a situation vibrating with incipient claustrophobia. But as the book progresses it becomes constipated on its own complexity, and the tension seeps out about the seams. A noteworthy debut, nevertheless.

ELMORE LEONARD

*Split Images*  
282pp. W. H. Allen. £8.95.  
0 491 03050 9

Robbie Daniels, a boyish-looking millionaire with a lust for blood, engages a trigger-happy ex-cop to help him in a crusade to preserve the American way of life. A good example of the best type of American thriller: direct, action, easy on the eye, with crisp dialogue, evocative description and tough, bloody action.

RICHARD COX

*The Ice Raid*  
319pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.  
0 09 149180 0

The Soviet Union suddenly seizes Spitzbergen from the Norwegians and begins to build a radar station there. The West protests; NATO slowly gathers its wits together: is this World War III, or another Cuban missile crisis? Exciting, action-filled story with a well-researched background and some very credible military characters.

MARGARET YORKE

*Find Me A Villain*  
185pp. Hutchinson. £6.95.  
0 09 151410 X

Distraught from the discovery of her husband's adultery, Nina leaves him and takes up the offer made by a chance acquaintance over tea at Fortnum and Mason's: to look after a large house in the Berkshire countryside while its owners are on holiday in South Africa. Unaccustomed to green wellingtons and the country life, she finds herself in an odd society, with some odd things going on. Delicate portrayal of semi-rural setting and characters, stronger direct action. But, nevertheless, fascinating in its meticulous analysis of human behaviour.

## The Proustian privet

Mary Kathleen Benet

BRUCE ARNOLD

*Running to Paradise*  
222pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.  
0 241 10998 1

This is the fourth volume of a quartet of novels, but it stands apart from the others. The scene of the first three was Copinger, a Cotswold boarding school for boys from disturbed homes, where the anonymous narrator of the series spent ten years. Now we follow him to London, and into a career as a fine-arts journalist. He has exchanged bleak regimentation for the freedom of a flat and a car; he is trying to exchange idealistic schoolboy love for the reality of sexual involvement.

Bruce Arnold is far too diffident to compete for the mantle of the English Proust. His enterprise has Proustian overtones; but after all we are in England, among a declining middle class that regrets past glories. He evokes perfectly the English atmosphere of sexual guilt and embarrassed religion, and the sense of living in a diminished world where art criticism is possible but art is not, where efforts at love are more feasible than love itself. Conscientious weather reports are given. We know what flowers grow in the gardens.

In keeping with this disconsolate sense of a heroic past slipping away, the vast empire of memory has been reduced to nostalgia, triggered by the scent of a sprig of privet. Luckily, however, one of Proust's more difficult lessons has been learnt: that of fictional architecture. The individual books, and the series as a whole, are beautifully shaped, with satisfying correspondences and recurrences.

The feeling of displacement and diminution is the stronger because so much of the book is a voyage round a

## S.O.S.SAS

Keith Jeffery

ANTHONY BEEVOR

*The Faustian Pact*  
208pp. Cape. £7.50.  
0 224 02083 8

The idea of kidnapping an important personage - a superficially attractive proposition to both terrorists and thriller writers, since it seems to offer an efficient means to their respective ends, whether they be gaining political concessions or selling books. The actual kidnapping, however, is little more than the start of the process: matters have to be arranged so as to achieve the desired result, but both the terrorist and the author have only a small number of available options. Having captured his target, the terrorist is limited to hanging on in the hope that his opponents' resolve will break. Various techniques can be adopted to increase the pressure applied: deadlines can be set, anguished tape recordings made, a relatively unimportant part of the body - fingers, ears and so on - can be amputated and delivered to the authorities. The author has perhaps a little more freedom of action.

Anthony Beevor, an ex-army officer turned author - this is his second political thriller - describes the capture of the Prime Minister by a group calling itself the Red Vanguard, who demand the release of prisoners in Northern Ireland. The story is told from the standpoint of David Rayner, a failed diplomat and Secret Service officer. Rayner does not play a central role in the government's efforts to release the Prime Minister. Indeed, having dealt with the actual "snatch" in some detail, the book tells us little about what inevitably large-scale operations which follow, but simply describes Rayner's personal life and his growing suspicions that the motives behind the kidnapping are not as clear-cut as they seem. As might be expected in a thriller of this sort, the secret world where Rayner works is

particularly repellent and unsatisfactory father, George, an alcoholic ex-naval officer whose many attempts at a fresh start in life, each time with a different woman, seem to the narrator infinitely more fascinating than his own fooling affairs. It is hard to agree with this judgment as we follow George from binge to reform to bed-sitter to odd jobs and finally to his deathbed, presided over by two women in low with him and at loggerheads with each other. George is a bore, and though the narrator professes to love him, he never makes us understand his appeal to the people who constantly bail him out of the mess he makes of things. The women in George's life hint that he is magnificent in bed, but since the book is too genteel to follow him there, this doesn't help us much.

Why is George so profoundly unhappy? What are the secrets of his past? All along, we have been promised revelations that are never made. No path is offered out of the unsatisfying conundrum: George is unhappy because he messes things up, and he messes things up because he is unhappy. We are told George is like Orion, a hero done in by the gods; but we see him in the saloon bar drowning about missed opportunities.

George's precepts are all negative. Don't philosophize, don't boast of what you have done, and - most ironic of all - don't become nostalgic. The narrator, making subtle play with these platitudes, manages some negative virtues of his own: the book is not fashionable, not exploitative, not forced. And, after all, the dilemma it sets up is insoluble. George's son wants to feel Christian forgiveness for his pagan reprobate, but much of what he feels is anger for his own blighted childhood. His act of homage is also an act of revenge. In not overreaching himself, in letting this paradox stand, Bruce Arnold concludes an achievement that is sincere, moving and elegant.

characterized by an abundance of mistrust, and Beevor is good on departmental jealousies and politicking. He also fashionably thickens the plot with hints that an international group on the extreme right is involved in the affair. Rayner's suspicions about this steadily isolate him and draw him towards a bleak dénouement.

Political fiction depends for its effect on credibility. The circumstances and events, at least at the beginning, must be plausible. So they are in *The Faustian Pact*, which starts well with its description of the SAS training in Wales (they play a major part in the story's climax). David Rayner, unhappily posted to liaison duties, and a middle-of-the-road socialist Prime Minister worried about the polls, are convincingly described. But the responses of both Parliament and government are not quite so believable. The House of Commons (with a Labour majority) immediately restores the death penalty, suspends Habeas Corpus (surely not necessary if the Prevention of Terrorism Act remains on the books) and it is much more dramatic a response than that which followed the assassination of Aley Neave by a terrorist bomb within the Palace of Westminster itself. In addition Rayner and his colleagues unquestioningly assume that the Irish Red Vanguard is a left-wing organization, a surprising conclusion, since the name could well imply a combination of the once-influential loyalist Vanguard Party and the extreme Protestant Red Hand Commando. There seems, moreover, to be no great interest in the terrorists' demands, themselves couched in markedly vague terms (or Protestant detainees - or both?) Rayner does not interest himself in these matters. For the most part he appears to be, in the unimaginative, not to say faintly stupid, person. If he is typical of British intelligence, hence then at least we may sleep easy in our beds, with nothing much to fear from the possible conspiracies of the state's clandestine agencies.

## Catching the inimitable

John Stokes

JOHN SZARKOWSKI and MARIA MORRIS HAMBURG

*The Work of Atget*  
Volume 1: The Art of Old France.  
178pp. 0 86092 060 7.  
Volume 2: The Art of Old Paris.  
180pp. 0 86092 067 4.  
Gordon Fraser. £25 each.

HANK O'NEAL

*Berenice Abbott: Sixty Years of Photography*  
266pp. Thames and Hudson. £30.  
0 500 54086 1

ANDRÉ KÉRTÉSZ

*A Lifetime of Photography*  
260pp. Thames and Hudson. £25.  
0 500 54085 3

In 1931 Walter Benjamin produced a remarkable essay which prefigures his more famous "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" and relates to his work on Baudelaire's Paris. It was called "A Small History of Photography" and it included an appreciation of a newly published book of studies by a photographer who, Benjamin believed, had "lived in Paris, poor and unknown, selling his pictures by a title to photographic enthusiasts scarcely less eccentric than himself". In the pictures of Eugène Atget the great cliché found a characteristic search for the authentic object, for "what was unremarked, forgotten, cast adrift... they pump the aura out of reality like water from a sinking ship."

Two volumes compiled from the Museum of Modern Art's Atget holdings have so far appeared here; a further two are announced. Already it is clear that Benjamin's powerful vision of the photographer as *flâneur* needs re-examination. The images may be just as Benjamin described, but the surrounding apparatus suggests different explanations of how they came into being. In his discriminating introduction to Volume One, John Szarkowski sets out in part (but only in part, since Atget is allowed "the mysterious promptings of an individual sensibility") to deromanticize the career.

Atget built his collection not through the random accumulation of subjects that interested him, but rather by the systematic exploration of topics that were consciously chosen for their relevance to one abiding idea: the creation of a body of photographs that would describe the authentic character of French culture.

This places Atget in the mainstream of nineteenth-century French intellectual life, as a classicist who subjugated himself to a grand ambition: a perfect unity between his vision and a world whose historical coherence could be established through the assembly of images. Moreover, from Maria Morris Hamburg's biographic essay which introduces Volume Two, we learn that when he set up in 1890-1 as a supplier of "documents pour Artistes" Atget was deliberately catering for a market; that he was a careful businessman whose pictures were comparatively expensive; that later, albeit reluctantly, he took on major commissions. Atget's professional activities after 1897 define his goal as documentation: "a discipline combining description, classification, and cataloguing". In his commercial heyday, from 1901 onwards, he reproduced his pictures in multiple editions and sold them both to craftsmen as models for design and to public institutions. Although Atget always jealously preserved his editorial control, he was involved in work for the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris. All this fresh information certainly seems to undermine Benjamin's type of the feckless city wanderer.

It is inevitable that the growing discipline of photo-history, of which these editions are magnificent examples, should change our ways of thinking about the art and its practitioners. Yet Susan Sontag has complained that books are not a wholly satisfactory scheme for making photographs available: "Nothing holds readers to the recommended order or

indicates the amount of time to be spent on each." Which may be true, but when the order of looking has been proposed by scholars of this seriousness, it would be a bold *flâneur* who stepped out of line.

Rejecting a purely chronological arrangement, the editors have made their own groupings, though these correspond in the main with Atget's complex cataloguing procedure. More than half the photographs in Volume One are taken from his first major series, which Mrs Hamburg labels "Landscape-Documents". They show that long before Atget was known as the photographer of Old Paris he had devoted himself to the Ile de France, a preoccupation that ran through his whole career. These are the rural pictures which confirm, in the editors' view, Atget's concern with the whole of French culture. They embrace, but are not confined to, superb studies of gnarled roots and broken branches, empty squares and ruined barns. The newly industrialized suburbs are not recorded.

Volume Two has pictures taken between 1898 and 1927, drawn from a number of series, mostly from "Art in Old Paris". Again, the sequence does not precisely reproduce Atget's own cataloguing principles, though the editors justify their own selection in view of "his flexible, open-ended understanding of his work". They have "focused on those subjects that inspired Atget's sympathy and on the periods of his most acute and creative insight".

Editorial methods can only be vindicated, as they are here, by a persuasive congruity between picture and text. At the same time, by comparing the plates with related figures reproduced on a small scale among the notes, we are permitted to reconsider the *oeuvre* in terms of both subject and chronology. In the years following the First World War, Atget's style became increasingly minimalist, his choice of subject apparently more parochial. Benjamin remains a wonderfully suggestive guide to these late pictures because he recognizes that it is precisely because they exclude the work of Haussmann, the Grands Boulevards, the Eiffel Tower and even the modern Parisiennes, that they are like "scenes of a crime" and constitute "standard evidence for historical occurrences, and acquire a hidden political significance".

## A talent to delight

David Coward

RAYMOND CASTANS and ANDRÉ BERNARD

*Les films de Marcel Pagnol*  
157pp. Paris: Julliard. 120 fr.

In the spring of 1929, Marcel Pagnol had two immensely successful plays running in the Paris *boulevards*: *Toussaint*, a story of the worm that turns, and *Marius*, a funny-sad tale of family life in Marseille. He gave up teaching and seemed set fair for a career in the theatre when Pierre Blanchard told him he should go to London, where *Broadway Melody*, one of the first talkies, was showing at the Palladium. Pagnol sat through it three times.

It was a revelation. Silent cinema he regarded as a variant of mime and too poetic to be anywhere near his notion of dramatic realism. The theatre now seemed limited not only by its essential artificiality but also because playwrights had to work so much harder to achieve what cinema did without trying. The playwright pointed a blunderbuss at his audience in the hope that some of his shot would carry, but the film-maker could show a tear on a cheek or record a significant whisper and be sure that the spectators would see and hear exactly what they were meant to. What his directorial "authorial tyranny" or "directorial fascism" to many *nouveaux cinéastes* seemed to Pagnol the essential precondition of cinematic art. Talking pictures, offered the story-teller total freedom to communicate a personal vision.

The essence of photography is, paradoxically, to confer previous existence upon its subjects. Nevertheless, Atget needed to reconstruct the conditions in which the crumbling buildings, leprous walls and tarnished doorways could show their historical age. Hence the empty streets and morning light. Hence too the acumen of Benjamin's notion of the artist as detective. What makes these books so valuable is not only their demonstration of the power of scholarship to open up a historical enterprise, but their revelation of a truth about photography's relation to history: whatever is disclosed exists by virtue of what has been excluded.

For their growing awareness of Atget all modern historians are profoundly indebted to another photographer, Berenice Abbott, who first discovered the master in Paris in 1926. Abbott immediately recognized his significance. In 1927 she took the famous but misleading portraits which show a frail old man distinguished by the liveliness of his eyes and the formality of his dress. When Atget died a year later, Abbott managed to acquire his personal collection - almost 1,500 glass plates and 8,000 original prints. This was the collection that the Museum of Modern Art purchased in 1968 and which forms the basis of the new research.

If the Atget collection is a monument to Abbott, her own photographs are, in a way, a monument to Atget. The history of modern photography is, after all, a tale of two continents. When Abbott returned to New York in 1929, she had "one aim, one desire: to catch and record this inimitable city". Her New York is an abutment of girders and their shadows, overhangings and underpinnings, phalanxes of skyscrapers that rise and fall in ceaseless transition. Like Atget, Abbott was attracted by the "commercial and nondescript" and photographed shop-fronts. Unlike Atget, she photographed the customer *en masse*. New York was a focus of production and distribution, the spread of its energy



Victor Hugo (nélas) in exile on Jersey photographed c 1853 by his son Charles-Victor, aided by Auguste Vacquerie; reproduced from *The Art of French Photography: with a Critical Dictionary of Photographers, 1845-1970* (284pp, with 200 illustrations, Princeton University Press, £65, 0 691 04002 8) to be reviewed in a later issue of the TLS.

In 1930, he declared publicly that silent movies were dead and the theatre was dying. His rather arch pronouncements provoked angry reactions - from René Clair, for example, who told him to stick to writing plays. But Pagnol persisted and like a modern Boileau set out his views in his own cinema magazine. His arguments ranged from the pseudo-political (since more people had seen the films of Chaplin in fifteen years than all the plays of Molière in 250, cinema democratized art) to a definition of the *film d'auteur* which he never abandoned. He insisted that the cinema-creator was the man who controlled all stages of the creative process. He should write, direct and edit. He should produce, choose titles and locations, supervise the lab work and, for good measure, take charge of distribution too. It was asking a lot - especially in 1930.

For the French cinema industry, which had dominated the world before 1914, was now at the mercy of foreign companies, like the German-backed Tobis, and of Hollywood imperialism. Paramount was already squeezing out Europe's national film industries. Pagnol met Robert T. Kane, Paramount's man in Paris, who at first mistook him for a light-bulb salesman. Pagnol, who had a degree in English, offered to interpret for him and was thus able to wander about the studios at Joinville talking to cameramen, sound-engineers and film-outlets, from whom he learned the basics of film-making. He persuaded Kane to make *Marius* and in 1931 Alexander Korda was imported to direct *Marius*, then the longest talkie ever made. It was shot in French, Swedish and German to maximize profits and to insure against

the losses Kane believed would result from Pagnol's bone-headed insistence on retaining the script and the cast of the original play. The result was not always the affection of a team which included Fresnay, Rainier, Fernandel and the underrated Charpin. His team and his words generated nearly twenty escapist, sentimental, melodramatic and quite irresistible films, most of which have dated surprisingly little. For behind the gags and the sadness lies a permanent concern for the emotions of ordinary people. Orson Welles said that *La Femme du Boulanger* was one of the best films he had seen; and after the war Italian neorealists like De Sica and Rossellini weep amazed to discover that Pagnol had beaten them to it with *Angèle and Regain*.

Raymond Castans and André Bernard have lovingly assembled a handsome album of stills which give a welcome flavour of Pagnol's *oeuvre*. The commentary is slight and critical judgments are rare and unfavourably eulogistic. The authors tut-tut about Josette Day's implausible blond-afro in *La Fille du Puisatier* and snigger disloyally that though Gabriel Gabrio looks right in *Regain* - as the giant Provençal peasant, he sounds like a Parisian bourgeois. They are coy about Pagnol's private life but shrewd about his reasons for giving up the movies in 1954: he was an ardent of the cinema who felt increasingly uncomfortable in what had become an industry.

But though such insights are infrequent, this is a timely and generous celebration of the work of a forgotten giant of the cinema who believed that the only way to merit the gift of laughter is in compensation for having first burdened them with intelligence.

requiring the sharpest attention. In Abbott's American pictures, a systematic accumulation of cultural images. Atget's European project becomes a Whitmanesque catalogue that preserves the Frenchman's fidelity to the object.

*Sixty Years of Photography* has an informative essay by Hank O'Neal, but the pictures are accompanied by comments from the photographer herself. Usually specific (time of day, difficulty of angle), they testify, like the photographs, particularly those done for scientific purposes, to Abbott's lifelong determination to develop her resources to the point where they might be commensurate with the reality of her subjects. This major new collection of her work is, as its title claims, the history of a practice.

"I like Kertész, but I don't like whimsy", wrote Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*. Kertész too is a master, but for contemporary tastes somewhat *à rebours*. His extreme versatility betrays his own presence in pictures which are witty, erotic and interested in illusion. (A number have posters as backgrounds, like provocative reminders of photography's comparative freedom from artifice.) Kertész enjoys chance, but he also makes points, whether abstractly, through pure shape, or symbolically, through composition. The pictures in *A Lifetime of Photography* (presumably selected by the "photograph editor") are grouped according to subject and place; though not divided into chronological sections, they are dated. Kertész's native Hungary in the 1920s is represented by peasants, caught unaware; his Paris, quite unlike that of Atget, is populated and motorized and does include the Eiffel Tower; his New York, quite unlike Abbott's, is solitary and often snowbound. The life of the photographer becomes a scrambled subtext, indicating a more individualistic view of history. Towards the end of the book there is a series taken in Parisian parks over some fifty years. Through the consistent elegance of iron chairs, we sense the durability of Kertész's imagination. Yet were the pictures not dated, (but response might not be quite so forthcoming) the "when" might remain as mysterious as the "why" - another indication of photography's alarming relation to time.



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## Jonathan Cape

## commentary



Edward Steichen's "Heavy Roses, Voulange, France" (1914), a photograph selected by Anisette Ellis for the exhibition *Personal Choice in the Henry Cole Wing of the Victoria and Albert Museum*.

## Jeux d'enfants

Alan Jenkins

Le Pont du Nord  
ICA Cinema

In recent French cinema there has been no meeting more fortuitous than that which brought together the ostensibly ill-matched Céline and Julie, nor an odyssey so consistently inventive and engaging as that which carried them towards their celebrated outing *en bateau*. For *Le Pont du Nord*, completed in 1981 and not shown in this country since a last-minute appearance at the London Film Festival of that year, Jacques Rivette has returned to the same governing idea as in *Celine and Julie*, but fashioned round it a film marked less by the mystification of surrealism than by the premise of occult mysticism (incidentally also that of the classic mystery plot): seek and ye shall find.

He again introduces two girls, Marie and Baptiste, whose three close encounters ("once is an accident; twice is chance; but three times is destiny, fate") make them partners in an adventure the exact nature and meaning of which escape both of them until too late—a runaway bemused joint, a complicated, Barthesian game with the signifiers of Parisian topology, a battle of wits, conducted on the move, against the sinister, and ambiguously well-disposed agents of an unspecified "them". Marie has been released from prison—her crime, we guess almost at once, one of complicity in some act of political terrorism (Rivette playing here on a previous existence of Bulle Ogier's, in *Fassbinder's The Third Generation*), and has come to Paris to re-establish contact with her lover Julien; Baptiste has come to wage war on the rampant masculinity of the metropolis. In her armour (an impregnable-looking leather jacket) and helmet, she cries the streets on her *mobylette*, snarling petulantly at the more virile machines that surround her, defacing offensive advertisement hoardings and shaking a defiant fist at the city's leonine statuary. The two girls meet and are mutually attracted ("You need me," insists Baptiste to the wif-like Marie, but the converse is true). They sleep rough (Baptiste limbering up after her night on a park bench with a passable imitation of Bruce Lee) and become over more deeply involved with Julien, whose briefcase—which they inexplicably steal—contains a map of Paris which in turn contains the key to "reality": dangerous, playful but finally implacable.

The two girls make of the map a board game on which, ominously, most of the squares are "traps", and start to play it. Their every move on the huge *déroulé* represents a foreknown and forestalled by an organization of gangster/terrorists, a murderous sub-department of watchful officialdom or perhaps simply a conspiracy of men (neither they nor we can tell, but the effects, so the implication runs, would

## Amorous dragons

Rosemary Ashton

R. B. SHERIDAN  
The Rivals  
Olivier Theatre

The National Theatre's new production of *The Rivals*, directed by Peter Wood, excels in the difficult task of bringing out the play's mixture of satire and sentiment. All four of Sheridan's young lovers, with their varying degrees of shrewdness and silliness, are acted with more energy and conviction than is usually achieved. Lydia Langrish (Ann Louise Lambert) is a high-pitched, sweet-eating devourer of romances, convincingly dependent for some excitement in her dull life on the tricks she can play on her aunt. Her lover, Jack Absolute (Patrick Ryecart), persuades us of his genuine attachment to Lydia, even though he is always acting some part—humouring as much Lydia's desire to elope with a poor man as his father's impossible demand that he marry a wife of the latter's choosing and yet not be "a dull, insensible varlet" lacking in the passions properly aroused in a man by a pretty girl.

The second pair of lovers, Julia and Faulkland, represent the play's sensibility. Faulkland, played by Edward Petherbridge with a Scottish accent (an allusion perhaps to Henry Mackenzie, of whose "Man of Feeling" Faulkland is clearly an epigone), is all nerve and self-hate in his egotistical, suspicious probing. He lovingly smooths out a drawing of himself by Julia which she has crumpled in exasperation at his quarrelsomeness; later he takes his coat and hat from her maid with meekness, knowing that Julia, having left him in tears, will not return and that the fault in temper is his, not hers. Fiona Shaw as Julia is perhaps a little too ironic, but she, too, by gesture and expression, conveys a range of feelings and makes us feel that her patience and honesty will succeed in curing her lover's temper.

Juan Gunter's handsome setting, on a circular stage representing the grey stone splendour of Bath, is cleverly exploited to turn four-storey exteriors quickly into be-windowed parlours for the ladies and lodgings, inns, or tailors' shops for the men. The pace is quick throughout. Even the virtuoso performances by Geraldine McEwan as Mrs Malaprop and Michael Hordern as Sir Anthony Absolute have an air of haste and energy about them. These two are well matched. Geraldine McEwan is a slim, almost too attractive, Mrs Malaprop, all of whose ridiculousness is in her voice and her nervous, rustling gestures, and none of

it in her make-up or costume. The familiar verbal mistakes are delivered with panache, vocal range and bold timing. She snorts and hums in perfect parallel (and in the last scenes in perfect harmony) with Michael Hordern's irascible Sir Anthony. Indeed, the affinity between these two old people, still capable of youthful desires but considered only as dragons by the young, is highlighted by these performances.

This is a hasty, gaudy, lecherous Sir Anthony, a comic but convincing old man, nearly but not quite a caricature, whose first gesture is a lustful glance (accompanied by a great rattling in the throat) after Lydia's maid, Lucy. Hordern balances his lecherousness so well with his desire for complete obedience from his son that the scene in which he discovers that Jack is in love with the very girl he has ordered him to marry stands out as central in the play. His relief that Jack has more spunk than submissiveness is both comic and moving. Father and son feel a warmth for one another which emanates from the similarities in their characters, despite the clashes between them.

This production, as well as keeping the chief characters within the bounds of believable humanity, highlights the question of honour and the dangers of hot combat. The soldiers and gentlemen sing stirring battle songs, boldly when in a group and drinking, markedly less so when alone. Acres, the country squire out of his depth in sophisticated Bath, is feelingly played by Tim Curry, though with a West Country accent that sometimes merges into an Irish one, particularly when he is playing a scene with Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Sheridan's inextinguishable rhetoric, his irony but also his indulgence of the human capacity for romance, for flights of imagination, come across strongly throughout, from Lydia's silly notions about elopement, Scott's parsons, and love in a cottage on no money to Sir Lucius's and Acres's braggadocio and Sir Anthony's delight in teasing Jack about his future wife's charms: "the lady shall be as ugly as I choose; she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the Crescent; her one eye shall roll like the Bull's in Cox's museum—she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet I'll make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty." This speech, like most speeches in this lively production, is delivered by Michael Hordern with fine gusto.

The next new production at the National Theatre will be Jean Giraudoux's *The Trojan War Will Not Take Place*, translated by Christopher Fry, directed by Harold Pinter, which opens in the Lyttelton Theatre on May 10; the cast includes Annette Crookley, Nicola Paget and Barry Foster.

### Author, Author

Competition No 119  
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than May 20. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

- Entries, marked "Author, Author 119", on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on May 27.
- 1 The blossoms fallen, the sapp gon from the tree  
The broken monuments of my great desires,  
From the so lost what may 't' affections be,  
What heat in Cynders of extinguish fiers?
  - 2 And freely men confesse that this world's spent,  
When in the Planets, and the Firmament  
They seeke so many new; then see that this
  - 3 'Tis not, what once it was, the World:  
But a rude heap together hurld;  
All negligently overthrow'n.  
Gulphes, Deserts, Precipices, Stone.

Competition No 118  
Winner: John Sargent  
Answer: A Go little book, go little fable  
Lucy of Bedford; she, that bounty  
Appropriates still unto that county.  
Ben Jonson, "Author ad Libitum".

2 Go, little naked and impudent songs;  
Go with a light foot  
(Or with two light feet, if it please you!)

Go and dance shamelessly!  
Go with an impertinent frolic  
Ezra Pound, "Salutation the Second".

3 Go, little book, and wish to all  
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,  
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,  
A house with lawns enclosing it,  
A living river by the door,  
A nightingale in the sycamore  
R. L. Stevenson, "Wishes".

## commentary

## A search for singleness

Frances Spalding

Lawrence Gowing  
Serpentine Gallery

Lawrence Gowing began his career at a moment when English art was in retreat, when Degas, Sickert and Chaim were replacing Picasso, Braque and Mondrian as models of this retrogressive art. There is no evidence in this retrospective that a Surrealist invasion had hit London in 1936, or that the "Gowings" and some forty studies for a landscape arrived on exhibition in 1938. Instead, we are presented with traditional themes—portraits, still-lives and landscapes—subjected to the seductive influence of rigorous design and well-toned, Old Master harmonies. In Gowing's early work, one is struck by a persistent mood of privacy and withdrawal. There is a painting of Wellington Square on a wet, winter day; a series based on cooking apples, their green unrelieved by anything except the surrounding penumbra; these are portraits of figures reading, sleeping or staring absently ahead, but faces more often than not half in shadow. These paintings conjure with vision, suggesting an alternative existence to the prominent position that Gowing has occupied in the art world for almost forty years.

His numerous publications include major studies of Vermeer, Renoir, Ingres, Cézanne and, most recently, Lucien Freud. Yet, as he himself states, it was not until late in his career that his critical activity had any apparent connection with his practical work. Nevertheless one cannot look at such sensitive and informed painting without realizing in it the alert perceptiveness and formidable intelligence that makes him such an outstanding writer on art. As a painter, he is aware of each part, of the precise role of every tone and mark and its relationship to the whole.

"Domestic", as Degas once said, "is the intelligence connecting one thing with another." It enlivens the drab scenes and sombre subjects that Gowing produced as a student at the Boston Road School, where, influenced by the anti-aesthetic of the documentary film-maker John Grierson, they strove for objective reports based on close attention to the mechanics of observation. Under the influence of William Coldstream, Gowing adopted the hatched brushstrokes of Cézanne and Degas, finding across form in his "Euston Road" (1939), achieving an attractive compromise between a demand for structure and atmospherics. As a painting method, it was a little too easy, harmonizing the raw facts of a busy street scene into something suspiciously sweet or, as Gowing now admits, "sentimental".

From the start he had evident ability,

as is revealed in "Mare Street, Hackney", painted in 1937 at the age of nineteen. In this he may have taken as his key the striped stems of the Belisha beacons, for the painting depends on a subtle organization of lights and darks. His acuity determines the placing of the pedestrians, the tone of the street lamp; it raises a dull green on the right hand side of the road to balance the faint wine red found on the left. These

disrupt the subaqueous harmony of the whole.

In his commentary for the catalogue, supplemented by passages from his diaries, Gowing displays remorseless self-analysis and intellectualization. He admits to a suspicion that a vein had been worked out by 1947; he therefore accepted a Professorship of Fine Art at the University of Durham, the first of

to be "close, material and pressing". At first these cavernous settings, often arranged around a path or stream through the woods, are dark and oppressive, broken only by patches of sunlight. Gradually the subject becomes less sensuous and more cerebral; the arching branches form arabesques, the greens turn acidic and then separate into neatly opposing blues and yellows. Repetition resulted in a formula: Gowing began to perceive landscape in terms of a coloured fabric attached to the four corners of the canvas but billowing out into space in the centre. In 1963 he reduced this idea to abstract terms, producing a blue and yellow chequerboard, its parabolic curves suggesting perspectival distortion; it marks his furthest remove from Degas and the closest he came to Vasarely.

Gowing was perhaps more unsettled by the rejection of traditional values in the 1960s than he here admits. Even before this date his paintings had begun to suggest that they did not engage the whole of his mind. Though he continues to excel at commissioned portraits and to delight in oil studies made from nature, the second part of his career seems devoid of a distinctive personal contribution. "While I was thinking longingly about singleness and wholeness," he recalls, "my paintings remained disembodied." As a form of recompense, he began making paintings using his own naked body as a stencil or a template, leaving ghostly records of his presence stretched or strapped across a bare canvas. He argues that the human body, as a proportionate whole, is a paradigm for the unity of art. To find the artist "identified in Umber", "Fixed", "Committed" in paint or plaster, after the earlier display of sensitivity, makes a sensational end to a show, held together throughout by rare intelligence.



Sir Lawrence Gowing's "Lady with Book" of 1941-42, included in the exhibition reviewed here and reproduced in its catalogue (61pp. Arts Council, £3. 0 7387 0354 8).

several administrative posts that have included the Deputy Directorship of the Tate Gallery and his current position as Slade Professor of Fine Art at University College London. But it is significant that the biography in the catalogue lists, alongside the publications, official honours and positions, the places where he painted each year. From the mid-1940s onwards landscape became a dominant concern. He favoured the *sous-bois* motif, wanting the colours of landscape

## Connoisseurial concerns

Francis Ames-Lewis

Italian Drawings from the Lugt Collection  
British Museum

Frits Lugt's highly developed feeling for quality in drawings matured during his years, at the beginning of the century, in the Amsterdam auction-house of Frederik Muller & Cie. His discriminating eye spotted many marvellous drawings then available at modest prices. The superb group of pen and ink drawings by Guercino, for example, which are among the finest in his collection, were assembled long before that artist regained popularity and before scholarly study had distinguished clearly between autograph drawings and copies. These drawings demonstrate vividly Lugt's remarkably consistent ability to recognize the hand of a master. But aesthetic quality was not Lugt's only criterion in his collecting. His scholarly interests were directed in particular towards investigating the history of collecting; his fascination with the provenance of drawings, summed up in his *Marques de Collections* (1921), the monumental encyclopedia of collectors' marks fundamental to any research into a drawing's past, led him to buy many sheets of historical importance but of less than superlative quality. Furthermore, since Lugt's major enthusiasm as a collector was for Flemish and especially Dutch drawings, he made no effort to assemble a representative collection of Italian drawings, buying simply what particularly appealed to him.

These characteristics of Lugt the collector result in a rather uneven exhibition at the British Museum (until May 13). It is larger than is necessary to give a clear sense of Lugt's connoisseurial taste, and it must be said that there are longeurs, especially among the groups of sixteenth-century drawings, some of which are aesthetically less engaging than those of earlier and later periods.

The sparkling quality of the best drawings stands out, however, to advantage against this relatively inferior backdrop. Those groups of drawings which thus proclaim their beauty share one essential characteristic, paradigmatic of Lugt's taste: a freedom and vivacity of handling which shows the heights of the draughtsman's creative impetus in every line and every dab of wash.

In this respect, the Guercino drawings are surely the triumph of the exhibition, though they are closely rivalled by five sheets by Giambattista Tiepolo which, in their different ways, show the draughtsman's tremulous sensitivity and flickering graphic energy. In contrast, Guercino's pen loops and swirls in long, curvilinear and flexible sweeps, creating form and movement with an excited vitality unmatched in the history of drawings. This dancing freedom is shared by Raphael's figure-study for the Borghese "Entombment", one of a group of four sheets which illustrate eloquently the major phases of Raphael's career: the controlled, Peruginian silverpoint style of his earliest years, the rapid, fluent dynamism of his pen in the Florentine period, and the confident modelling and warm tone of the red chalk used in many of the early North Italian and Venetian drawings exhibited, in the brisque graphic contrasts of Stefano da Verona (a rare and very fascinating draughtsman), in the quick, angular touch of Carpaccio's pen, or in the bold outlines and shadows of Titian's important preliminary study for an assembly of figures, this vivid creative excitement is reflected in several landscape and nature studies, especially those by Fra Bartolommeo, Giulio and Domenico Campagnola and Federico Barocci. In alert responsiveness to the life and rhythms of nature, Italian draughtsmen came perhaps closest to the great landscape observers of Northern Europe whose drawings were the subject of Frits Lugt's greatest enthusiasm.

The exhibition is doubly a tribute to

another fine connoisseur, whose penetrating discernment is unlikely to be rivalled often among younger generations of students of old master drawings. James Byam Shaw's eightieth birthday coincides happily with the publication of his monumental catalogue *The Italian Drawings of the Frits Lugt Collection* (3 vols. Paris: Institut Néerlandais, 2113). The work of six years' intensive research, this book is a model of urbane scholarship which future catalogues of other sections of Frits Lugt's collections will do well to match. In its erudition and its keen concern for detail it reflects many of the qualities of Lugt's own work, not least in the meticulous discussion of the technique, condition and history of each drawing. The high standard of production of the book and the clarity and faithfulness of the plates live up to the superlative quality of the best drawings in the exhibition.

The National Gallery has recently acquired one of the most ambitious and accomplished works by the German sixteenth-century painter, Johann Rottenhammer (1564-1625); it was in the collection of the Earl Spencer from at least 1822, and has now been cleaned. Painted c. 1598 on copper, "The Coronation of the Virgin" is exceptionally large for a painting on this material, and was clearly intended as a bravura piece, ambitious in both scale and content. A host of figures is shown, including the Trinity, Adam and Eve, angels, prophets and saints. The impact is of a vast altarpiece concentrated into a painting the size of a small window. Some of the figures shown may well be portraits of important men of the day, dressed up as saints. In his life-time, Rottenhammer had a great reputation for both secular and religious work. Born in Munich, he lived for a considerable period in Italy, spending the years 1596 to 1606 in Venice. "The Coronation of the Virgin" displays the influence of the great sixteenth-century Venetian painters. It can be seen in Room 28.

## New Oxford Books: History

### The Jewish Community in British Politics

Geoffrey Alderman

This book is the first study ever made of the Jewish involvement in British political life, and of the electoral politics of Anglo-Jewry. It spans the period from the Readmission of the Jews into England until the present day, and draws on a wide range of historical sources and—for the contemporary period—sample surveys and interviews. £17.50

### Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945

David Welch

Although film is beginning to engage the attention of students of history, historians in the past have repeatedly failed to recognise the richness of film as a source of evidence. This book examines Nazi film propaganda as a reflection of National Socialist ideology. In order to discover what this reveals about the nature of propaganda in general and the ideology of National Socialism in particular. Illustrated £19.50

### The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis

Volumes II, III, and IV  
Marjorie Chibnall

Written in Normandy between 1114 and 1141, the *Ecclesiastical History* has been called "the greatest of all medieval chronicles". With the release of these three volumes, all six volumes of the history are now available. A superbly edited Latin text and a unique English translation of the work of a major medieval historian. *American Historical Review*. £45 each

### Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain 1838-1918

David Englander

The fundamental antagonism of property and non-property represents a vital but curiously neglected aspect of class relationships in urban Britain. This book examines that relationship, the tensions and conflicts generated by the operation of a free market in the provision, ownership, and control of working class housing, and shows how the politics of tenancy transformed the politics of housing. £22.50

### Constitutional Code

Volume One  
Jeremy Bentham  
Edited by F. Rosen and J. H. Burns

Jeremy Bentham's massive, unfinished *Constitutional Code* (1822-32) is the major work of his last years and contains the most important statement of the theory of constitutional democracy which emerges after his well-known conversion to political radicalism in 1808-10. £48 *The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham*

### Oxford University Press

£19.50



## to the editor

### Einstein

Sir, - It is a little difficult to know why Sir Brian Pippard devotes such a large proportion of his review of Abraham Pais's book *"Subtle is the Lord..."* (April 1) to an attack on anti-relativists. He does not refute their case, but sets up his own interpretations of some anti-relativist arguments in order to dismiss them, and also accuses the critics of incompetence ("This is the step the objects cannot take...").

It is clear, both from the wording of Sir Brian's argument and its context in the review, that he assumes that the twin paradox (or clock paradox) and the asymmetrical ageing of space travellers can be adequately treated within the domain of special relativity. Yet the book that he is reviewing includes the following statement (p145), referring to Einstein's original prediction of asymmetrical ageing in his paper on special relativity:

He [Einstein] called this result a theorem and cannot be held responsible for the misnomer *clock paradox*, which is of later vintage. However, as Einstein himself explained some time later, the logic of special relativity does not suffice for the explanation of the phenomenon (which has since so often been observed in the laboratory) since frames other than inertial ones come into play.

If the result in question is a theorem of special relativity, and yet the special theory is insufficient for the explanation of the phenomenon, then these facts themselves show that the special theory is inadequate.

Sir Brian may be correct in saying that any attempt to discard the special theory would cause chaos rather than enlightenment. That is not sufficient reason to refuse to consider that possibility, and I suggest that scientists should take to heart Emerson's statement that we can take our choice between truth and repose, but that we can never have both. The abandoning of special relativity would involve a scientific revolution; like other scientific revolutions, it might cause chaos for a time, but it might also lead to an enormously stimulating period of scientific research. Scientists should not shrink from grasping such an opportunity.

I. MCAUSLAND,  
Department of Electrical Engineering, University of Toronto.

Sir, - In his exceptionally interesting review of the new biography of Albert Einstein, by Abraham Pais, Sir Brian Pippard (April 1) has gone astray on one aspect of Einstein's activities: his efforts over a period of some thirty-five years on behalf of the Zionist movement and, in particular, the Hebrew University. To assert that he was "no-Zionist" does less than justice to Einstein's memory and the Jewish avant-garde would have been the first to repudiate any such notion.

The record of Einstein's Zionist sympathies is almost as well documented as his scientific papers, beginning at least as early as 1919. After discussion and argument with Kurt Blumenfeld, a leading German Zionist, in February of that year he declared: "... as a Jew I am from today a supporter of the Jewish Zionist efforts". Two years later, even before the Palestine Mandate had been endorsed - Einstein accompanied Dr. Weizmann on a Zionist mission to the United States. "I'll do everything that is demanded of me", he wrote to Weizmann in 1923 but asked to be spared from attending congresses and similar meetings.

None the less he decided to take part in the inaugural meeting of the enlarged Jewish Agency in Zurich, where he spoke in the following vein: "I see the tragedy of the modern Jew in the fact that though he represents a nation, it is a nation decomposed into atoms. The individual Jew is isolated and suffering from the misery of isolation. That misery has turned into a tragic situation. But how should a remedy be created, save by the establishment of one's own home? He who saw it

clearly... was Herzl... He saw that a common work was only possible if the people could itself create that community... He also saw with the sure instinct of political genius that that work could be nothing else but the upbuilding of Palestine."

In the final weeks of his life, Einstein wrote to the Israelis expressing concern at the political situation and offered to help in some way. He was preparing a nation-wide television broadcast but became ill before completing the script.

Even after his death Einstein's links with the Zionist movement were ensured by his bequest to the Hebrew University of his private archives consisting of nearly 50,000 pages of material, including some 4,000 items of scientific content. These archives now join the Newton collection.

In his theological writings Isaac Newton affirmed the doctrine of the Restoration of the Jews but admitted "the manner I know not. Let time be the interpreter". Einstein lived to see the day - and played a not unimportant role as a practical pioneer of renaissance Israel.

DAVID CARRINGTON,  
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### 'Ulpian'

Sir, - This critic's wrath - admiring amusement at such effrontery, rather - is directed towards Honoré's use, misuse and misstatement of evidence for *Ulpian* (and his other books). For him (Letters, April 8), the way Ulpian uses *per contrarium quoque* is determined by a mighty strange reference (check it) to Quintilian, not by studying Ulpian. Another lovely example: Honoré argues that the first five books of Ulpian *ad edictum* were written earlier than the others and claims in evidence that a higher proportion of sentences end with the present indicative of the verb *esse*. He finds fifty examples. Even if one could accept - one can't - that it is the form of the verb, not its use as present indicative or auxiliary, that is to be treated as a usage, the form occurs only thirty-three times. The occurrence is not more frequent than in the subsequent books. The counting is simple.

It is an interesting question how one can make such gross mistakes, be so consistent in error and not in anything else. Honoré demolishes the obstacles to his thesis by the rapid fire of fake ammunition. It is comforting that only if someone fixes a better chronology (for Honoré) shall he be able to see for the first time (for Honoré) whether one or more of his findings is "wrong".

ALAN WATSON,  
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### The Asiatic Mode of Production

Sir, - I am most grateful to Ernest Gellner for his extended, detailed, and in certain important respects, generous, essay-review (January 14) of my recent book *The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production*. At the same time, I must confess that I find Gellner's position somewhat puzzling, even because it seems to me that in order to be consistent with what he says about Marxism in the opening paragraphs of the review, Gellner would have to conclude that I had wasted my time in writing the book, or at least that my research, whatever its purely scholarly merits might be, had about the same degree of present relevance as a study of early Christian heresies, or of the intricacies of Buddhist doctrine. Needless to say, this is not the way I see my work, and judging by the final portion of the review, Gellner does not see it that way either.

I certainly do not agree that the "concrete content" of Marxism is "now discredited", except perhaps in certain circles. In a purely political sense for reasons not relevant in any

straightforward way to its merits as a body of social theory - and even this body of highly questionable given the current economic situation in many Western countries. Nor do I find Gellner's parallels between Marxist and Christian doctrine particularly persuasive. In fact, his most striking comparison is faulty, even in its own rather arbitrary terms: if and when the revolution comes, those who reject it and fight against it - as large numbers of people will probably feel compelled by their class interests to do, and as some others may do for other reasons - will be physically or socially destroyed (if the revolution is worldwide), or at least expelled (in the case of one limited to a single country); they will hardly be saved against (or independently of) their wills. More broadly: by any serious and sophisticated Marxist interpretation - including many of those now being made by Soviet scholars - there is nothing automatic or predestined about the course of history; it is determined, not by the transcendent plan of any deity, but by the actions and reactions of human beings, who, as individuals, are free to act and react in various ways. Finally, the Marxist theory of history (and I am not concerned, either here - except for purposes of rebuttal - or in the main text of my book, with other forms, aspects, or elements of the Marxist tradition) is not a mere failed utopian vision, but a hypothesis about the way history works, and one which in principle is testable - although admittedly the process of testing is more complex, and its methodology less advanced, in relation to a theory of this kind, than for example in the natural sciences.

Turning now to some of the specific points raised in the review:

1. The omission of the Nikiforov book and the earlier article from my analysis - resulted from simple ignorance on my part. On the other hand, Semenov's 1980 article became available only after the initial submission of my manuscript to the publishers. However, having now looked in a preliminary way at the Nikiforov book, I think that, while it would have permitted me to refine my argument at certain points, and to expand my source base somewhat, it does not call for major revisions in what I wrote. Nikiforov does not seem to reach conclusions fundamentally different from those of Kachanovskii in his 1972 book, which I analysed in some detail, or to go significantly beyond the latter in coverage of the sources. Furthermore, Nikiforov's main points are rather fully anticipated

in the papers presented by him during the later stages of the debate on the Asiatic mode of production.

2. Gellner makes me appear more heterodox, in relation to the Marxist tradition as currently constituted, than I really am - which may be in part my own fault, for omitting an important element from the analysis. In 1970, Iu. I. Semenov published, in *Narodnyi Ažiti* (no 5), an important article, "The Theory of Socioeconomic Systems and the Process of World History" (translation in *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology*, 1977, vol 16, no 1) in which he set forth a modification of the sequence of social orders, as it had been conceived of up to that point, on which the concluding paragraphs of my book were based. I elected not to analyse this article in detail, because I feared that it would take me into excessively deep philosophical water. A detailed treatment of the issues involved here is included in a joint article by my wife and myself now in the final stages of preparation, which will appear, we hope, before long in the *Journal Soviet Union*. Very briefly, Semenov contends that the historical process now takes place on a worldwide scale rather than within any more limited area: therefore (although Semenov does not exclusively draw this final conclusion) the inability of the social order governed by the Asiatic mode of production to evolve from within itself does not negate the law-governed nature of the historical process as a whole. It is true that capitalism developed only once in history, but this also applies to Darwinian biological evolution, and no one to my knowledge contends on this basis that Darwinian evolution is not an example of the operation of natural law.

STEPHEN P. DUNN,  
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### (Dr) Johnson

Sir, - I entirely agree with Nora Crook (Letters, April 1) that the addition of unnecessary names or epithets to distinguish female from male writers is unconscionable. As she writes, "Why this provincialism on our part... does Anthony Burgess really want us to go back to the days of 'Miss Austen's exquisite fictions', etc?"

But why, when giving us this admirable exhortation, does she refer in her letter to one "Dr Johnson"? To be sure, Samuel Johnson (1709-84), if one needs to distinguish him from

other literary Samuel Johnsons, some of them also "Doctor" was awarded honorary doctorates from Oxford and Dublin universities. But he was no more in the habit of using the epithet than most other sensible writers so honoured - than, say, Thomas Stearns Eliot, also the recipient of an honorary doctorate from Oxford, whom Nora Crook refers to, not as "Dr Eliot", but as "T.S."

I am putting together a biography of Johnson's later years, those in which he received his two honorary doctoral degrees, and am trying to puzzle out why modern writers persist in stigmatising him as "Doctor". Nora Crook writes, "we have changed our practice for the better over the past 100 years." I wish she would tell us what impels her to continue to use that provincial designation. Does she really want us to go back to the days of "dear, quaint old Dr Johnson's amusing personal idiosyncrasies"?

DONALD GREENE,  
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### 'Brecht's Early Plays'

Sir, - I was interested to read R.C. Speirs's letter written in reply to my review of *Brecht's Early Plays* (March 25). If he had made the points in his book that he makes in his letter, he would have come closer to getting the balance right, but in English usage the word "bookshop" suggests the owner of a bookshop; his employees are normally described as "assistants". Since Garga is an assistant in an establishment which is primarily a lending library, it is doubly misleading to label him as a bookseller.

Dr Speirs's letter also provides evidence to substantiate a point I made in my review about the dangers of sleight-of-hand in the problem presented by Brecht's revision of his texts. At the very least, Speirs should have made it clear which text he was using. The variations between the different versions of *Baal* are more important than the discrepancies between the two versions (1922 and 1927) of *Im Dickicht*, but in the Subkamp edition of Brecht's *Stücke*, Garga says: "Ich verkaufe Ihnen die Ansichten von Mr. J. V. Jensen und Mr. Arthur Rimbaud..."; according to Speirs's letter, he says: "I'll sell you the New Testament...".

RONALD HAYMAN,  
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### Among this week's contributors

LESLIE ALCOCK is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Glasgow.

PERCY ALLUM's books include *L'Italia tra crisi ed emergenza*, 1979.

FRANCIS AMES-LEWIS is co-author with Joanne Wright, of *Drawings in the Italian Renaissance Workshop*, 1983.

JAMES BARR is Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford.

MARY KATHLEEN BENET's books include *The Character of Adoption*, 1976, and *Writers in Love*, 1977.

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG is the editor of *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution*, 1983.

HUMPHREY CARPENTER's *The Inklings* was published in 1978.

DAVID COWARD is a lecturer in French at the University of Leeds.

GAVIN EWART's recent collection of poems, *More Little Ones*, was published earlier this year.

STEPHEN FENDER's *Plotting the Gods West* was published last year.

ARTHUR FREEMAN's *Elizabeth's Misfits: Brief Lives of English Eccentrics, Exploiters, Rogues, and Failures 1580-1660* was published in 1978.

JASPER GRIFFIN is a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. His books include *Snobs*, 1982.

J. H. C. LEACH is a Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford.

E. R. J. OWEN is the author of *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914*, 1981.

PHILIP PETTIT is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Bradford.

VIOLET POWELL's most recent book, *The Constant Novelist: A Study of Margaret Kennedy*, will be published in June.

PETER REDGROVE's most recent collection of poems, *The Apple-Brook*, was published in 1981.

ALAN RYAN teaches politics at New College, Oxford.

FRANCES SPALDING is the author of *Roger Fry: Art and Life*, 1981.

ZARA STERNER is the editor of *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministers of the World*, 1982.

JOHN STOKES is the author of *Outer Wilds*, 1978. He is a lecturer in English at the University of Warwick.

FRANK TUOHY's collection of stories, *Live Bait*, was published in 1978.

DAVID WALKER is Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings, Scotland, and co-author of *The Architecture of Glasgow*, 1968.

## Finding room for fundamentalism

### E. R. J. Owen

FOUND MORTIMER  
Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam  
Paber. £10.50 (paperback, 1983)  
1571 11944 1

In recent months Egyptian television has been presenting a weekly discussion between an elderly sheikh and one of the imprisoned members of the extremist religious group, Jihad. Its purpose is clearly to show that these young men are misguided, foolish and ignorant about their own religion. But a number of those who watch what is shown across most strongly is not the wisdom and maturity of the sheikhs but the confidence of their young opponents, based, among other things, on their calmly stated belief that the message of the Koran is as open to the ordinary Muslim as to the expert, and their refusal to allow themselves to become side-tracked into a legalistic examination of religious minutiae, such as, in one January programme, the possible role of Islam in regulating Cairo's traffic.

The use of these programmes is part of a wider strategy of the Egyptian government, aimed at isolating the religious extremists while attempting to find a constructive political role for the more moderate elements. It is a project which has occupied the rulers of many Muslim countries for decades of years, and if history is anything to go by, there is no certainty that they may not provide a strong argument for those who believe that Egypt's new ruler must insist on maintaining a regular dialogue with the country's secular opposition, on the grounds that if the two sides cannot learn to swim together they face the prospect of sinking separately in a sea of religious fundamentalism. It is probably an over-pessimistic reading of the situation. But the confidence of Jihad, the frequently repeated argument that, in a divided society, the only real need for an Arab ruler is that he is only the fundamentalist groups which are willing to stand up and fight for what they believe, the picture of President Sadat's chief assassin, the "martyr" Abd al-Karim al-Najjar, on current Iranian postage stamps, are eloquent pointers to some of the problems ahead.

The situation in Egypt is, of course, but one aspect of the general revival of religious activism throughout most of the Islamic world, a phenomenon which most observers have linked, in a very general way, to the defeat of the major ideologies of socialism and nationalism in the disastrous 1967 war with Israel, the rise of petroleum power among the more conservative Arab peoples and a sense of economic and social change, largely away from Western or American auspices. As is well known, the fear, disillusionment and sometimes the single voyeuristic excitement with which these developments were greeted, outside the Islamic world - particularly after the revolution in Iran - produced a large number of instant analyses by self-proclaimed experts, and it is only now that the time seems to be for a more sober and balanced assessment of the major forces at work.

Certainly one of the best of these is Edward Mortimer's *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam*. Clearly determined to avoid the basic mistake of most of his predecessors in presenting Islam as a kind of monolithic entity which can be used to explain anything and everything, he concentrates instead on the study of what Muslim political actors have said and done, and in particular, on the ways in which they have identified and sought to tackle what they regard as the major political problems concerned with power, authority and the very large claims which, Islam insists, make about the proper organization of society. To do this Mortimer begins with a model summary of Islamic political practice as it stood about 1900, before passing on to a study of how these major problems have been treated in certain

concrete historical situations in the twentieth century: Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the central Arab lands, Iran and the Muslim areas of Soviet Central Asia.

Mortimer takes as his central theme the observation that "every Muslim state has somehow to define the role that Islam plays in it, and a modern Muslim state has either to choose between Islam and nationalism or to find some synthesis of the two". This leads him naturally to spend most time analysing developments at the level of the government and state and he has particularly enlightening things to say about the use of constitutions and of legal systems to try to solve the dilemmas. But in two chapters, those on the central Arab lands and Iran, he describes the process by which a number of essentially secular solutions to the problem came to be challenged by popular forces representing a more religiously oriented view of socio-political arrangements, notably the Muslim Brothers and the followers of Ayatullah Khomeini.

The main virtue of such an approach is that Mortimer has found a relatively simple way of presenting some of the most important aspects of his subject, and of explaining their enduring vitality, while managing to remain humble in front of its essential difficulty and complexity. It also helps that he continually presents himself as an outsider, without access to any esoteric source of specialized knowledge. Nevertheless, such an approach has obvious limitations. I would like to suggest three.

First, by ending his general historical section on the political life of the Muslim peoples at the end of the nineteenth century, Mortimer deprives himself of any way of exploring the nature of what it is they now have in common and of the continuous process of interaction between them. It is true that he mentions a number of present links - for example the general influence exercised by particular thinkers like the Pakistani Maududi, or the very obvious fear felt by many Arab rulers at the Iranian revolution.

## Beyond the *zahir*

### C. J. Heywood

MICHAEL GILSENAN  
Recognising Islam  
288pp. Croom Helm. £12.95.  
(paperback, £6.95).  
0 7099 1119 X

To Jacob Burckhardt, Islam was "a low religion of slight inwardness" and an anthropologist well known in his own field, can neither hide behind archival barricades nor take refuge in the elegant but slip judgments of the journalist. And yet, in this revelatory and self-revelatory memoir, he seems to have been struck at an impressionable age by sentiments akin to both Burckhardt's and Nalpaui's: not from afar, but close to, in the feudal sunset glow of British and shakily rule in what is now the People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen. That was more than twenty years ago, but instead of turning away, Gilsenan stayed on, in an attempt to account satisfactorily for the apparent discrepancy between the public and the private faces of piety, and for what seemed to be an irresolvable contradiction between manifestations of slight spiritual inwardness and strong social cohesion.

The result is a powerful, if uneven work, which may become a classic in its genre. Gilsenan's starting-point, which reflects current scholarly orthodoxies, is that, beginning with the Ottoman state in the mid-nineteenth century, Islamic society was secularized and religion effectively removed as a basic element in political, economic and even social life. One result of this was to deprive the *umma*, the "men of learning and authority", from their privileged position as guardians and interpreters of Islamic revelation and, therefore, as arbiters of the political, ideological and economic structures of the state. In this role they were empowered, later, to legitimize the deposition of a sultan or the disposal of a disputed inheritance. Under the strokes of reform, religion changed from being something enshrined in the state to something objectified as an "irrational" and external barrier to secular progress.

As a result, as Gilsenan astutely observes, the formally defined "Islamic character" of the Ottoman

But this is not the same as an analysis of the manner in which the Muslim world can be thought of as a single culture area or, more importantly, as a serious attempt to find a way of explaining what it is about the history, symbols and central tenets of Islam which continues to exercise such a hold over the peoples of so large a region of the globe. Mortimer rightly shrinks from the impossible task of producing a short, simple answer to his own final question - "what is Islam?". But this is not to say that there is no answer at all, particularly if you are prepared to cast your net as widely as Clifford Geertz and Michael Gilsenan have done.

Second, by concentrating on the larger question of the political structures of nation states, Mortimer leaves himself little time to examine important processes within each country, for example the overlap between religious, economic and cultural forces in the urban warfare in Turkey or Lebanon in the 1970s, or the ways in which politico-religious concepts are reproduced and amended over time. In the latter case it is obviously not just a question of looking at the religious component in education or propaganda but involves the more difficult task of examining the processes of ideological formation in societies in which the language used by public figures is deeply imbued with religious imagery, making it particularly hazardous to try to sort out what is being said and done for religious reasons and what for some other reason. Perhaps one way into this complex subject would be to analyse the developing use of certain key concepts like "corruption" or "the people", both of which have a definite place in a religious as well as a more secular vocabulary and both of which seem to have played a central role in popular movements in many parts of the Islamic world. In Iran it was the notion of the *umma* which was the oppressed people to struggle against an unjust and corrupt ruler which seems to have acted as an important bridge between the religious and the more secular components of the anti-Shah opposition. In many Egyptian villages

today the main form of political debate is between the "haves", who seek to justify the inevitable inequalities produced by the policies of "infitah" or economic liberalization with an appeal to religious conservatism, and the "have-nots", who struggle to deploy the emotive notion of corruption, defined very generally as the unfair accumulation of wealth - against them. Attention to language would also have revealed what must certainly have been a major source of the strength and confidence of Juhaiman bin Muhammad Utaibi (the leader of the attack on the Great Mosque in Mecca in 1979): the fact that his writings are completely free of the usual arguments against Western influence - with their necessarily apologetic overtones - and concentrate only on the harm done to the Islamic community by bad Muslim rulers.

Third, there is the question of different organizational forms taken by popular politico-religious groups. Mortimer makes some good points about the important distinctions



An Islamic miniature of a monkey stealing lentils, in a thirteenth-century Arabic manuscript of the Fables of Bidpai, reproduced from Hugo Buchta's *Art of the Mediterranean World AD100 to 1400* (207pp, with 367 plates. Washington, DC: Decatur House Press. \$75. 0 916276 11 2).

between the aims of different Egyptian fundamentalist groups, such as Takfir wal-Hijra and the Islamic Liberation Movement, and rightly draws attention to the ways in which the leaders of both were driven to premature acts of violence by the powerful sense of urgency which they had instilled into their own followers. But he is surely wrong to suggest that the Muslim Brothers under Hassan al-Banna have to be seen, fundamentally, as a political organization, when their success was due to the fact that they could be a number of different things at the same time: a discussion group, a benevolent association, a focus for military action, etc. all based on a structure of linked groups of "families" living in particular quarters and often attending the same mosque. It is this type of mosque-oriented, cell-based organization in a number of Muslim countries which has provided the strength and flexibility not only to resist enormous state pressure in the 1960s and 1970s but even to proselytize, recruit and expand.

Wherein, however, does the authority of the sheikh lie? Quite simply, "he knows" - the inner secret truth, the *bahir*, which lies behind and concealed by the vain appearances of the world, the *zahir*. The sheikh "knows" - by transcendent means - the hidden transgressions of his followers: illicit sexuality, secret encounters; all, in the village society of north Lebanon encountered later by Gilsenan, what he calls "the most veiled, concealed, and potentially dangerous elements of individual and group life upon which honour and family depend".

The psychological insights which inform the case histories brought forward by Gilsenan to illustrate his thesis are the most revealing part of this revealing book, but his essay on village and urban geography may also prove as stimulating to historians as to anthropologists. And yet the book, as a whole, is hard to pin down and impossible to classify. Perhaps it is, as the author modestly suggests towards the end, no more than a ramble through a Middle Eastern landscape, but a landscape of both. For once the outsider has become the insider, perhaps even, in his own way, a sort of sheikh. May his store of *bahrak* not be reduced.

Gilsenan's concern, however, is with the present, or at least with the very recent past. Here, from his experience in Egypt and Lebanon, he writes from close to; unlike Nalpaui, although equally a self-conscious outsider, he knows the language and he knows more history. Half Candide, half Mayhew, the result is an intricate memoir of study and travel among the believers during the past twenty years. In Egypt, Gilsenan's impressions were formed by a long period of living close to members of the Sufi order (*tarika*) of the Hamidiya Shaziliya, a brotherhood (in the 1960s) under the Cairo police. In this world, under the guidance of the sheikh, miracles happen and demonstrate the workings of the saint: a suitcase left on a bus is returned by a stranger; a pound note found in a school-book ceases a temporary financial crisis; the money for a taxi fare is found in a previously empty pocket; to the urban poor of Cairo these little events are not evidence of altruistic honesty or simple forgetfulness, but tiny "miracles" in a universe where, because life is in fact mainly controlled by external forces, the notion of hidden determination

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# Rise of the adventurers

Zara Steiner

Geoffrey Barraclough

From *Agadir to Armageddon: Anatomy of a Crisis*  
196pp. Weldenfeld and Nicolson.  
£8.95.  
0 297 78174 X

Geoffrey Barraclough is the least insular of historians. He has moved over centuries, countries and civilizations with an authority and penetration that have commanded the admiration of the more enlightened members of an often restricted and restricting profession. This latest publication will not surprise those familiar with his concerns and range of interests. It is basically a cautionary tale in which the Agadir crisis is used as a warning of the consequences of great-power intervention in the affairs of unstable countries. With many qualifications, Professor Barraclough sees behind the American decision to send the Seventh Fleet to the Persian Gulf in 1979 the same forces at work as those which led to the French "dash to Fes" and that sequel of events which turned Europe into a bloody battleground.

This short book consists, for the most part, of a re-telling of the Agadir drama using some of the more recent accounts, including Jean-Claude Allain's important *Agadir, 1911*, which have examined the domestic roots of pre-1914 diplomacy. In depicting the internal pressures and the underlying assumptions which turned a colonial march into a test of the European balance of power, Barraclough points up the analogies with our present situation. In so doing, he raises questions of both a historical and didactic kind which cast doubt on the appropriateness of this particular lesson.

Many historians have seen 1911 as a "critical year". Fears of an economic downturn intensified the anxieties of the wealth-owning classes throughout Europe and increased the dangerous restlessness of the working classes. There was rural and industrial unrest in France, fear of a Social Democratic recovery in Germany, a wave of strikes of an unprecedented kind in Britain, and an acceleration of those tensions so dramatically portrayed by George Dangerfield in his still influential book, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*. Domestic upheavals, it is argued here, encouraged the politicians to look abroad.

## Decline of the liberals

Douglas Johnson

NORMAN STONE

Europe Transformed 1878-1919  
407pp. Fontana. Paperback, £3.50.  
0 00 634262 0

Sir Osbert Sitwell, in his autobiography, exudes a powerful nostalgia when he writes about the days "before the war", meaning, of course before the 1914 war. Never, he wrote, had the world gone so well for all classes of the community. There was "an infinite sweetness in the air we breathed", while each and every day people were conducted into a Paradise by the benevolent popes of science. "How could one doubt in progress?" "Look at Sir Thomas Lipton: look at turbine engines. How could you doubt?" asks Sir Osbert.

In his account of the history of Europe in the forty years before 1914 Norman Stone seems to echo him. Although the population had increased considerably, most people were fed, housed and generally looked after far better than before. In this period of what Stone calls "extraordinary peace and prosperity" education progressed to the point of virtually universal literacy in most countries (he goes so far as to suggest, in a typically provocative aside, that it might be the case that there was less illiteracy in England in 1914 than there is nowadays). Millions had moved from their insular and stagnant rural dwellings and gone to the United States, or some other land of

opportunity, while others had moved to towns, now being equipped with excellent means of transport, amenities and much grandness. Modern science had prolonged life and reduced pain. The French had begun to "dig" in the chemists' shops, and in Germany the number of tobaccoists grew by more than 50 per cent in the years between 1882 and 1892. Everywhere post offices had multiplied and people wrote to each other increasingly. Just as Sitwell points to Stone points to Henry James. In 1895 James acquired electric lighting; in 1896 he rode a bicycle; in 1897 he used a typewriter; in 1898 he saw a cinematograph. Within a few years, it is argued, he could have had a Freudian analysis or travelled in an aircraft. How can you doubt?

It is true that Stone also illustrates the other side of the story. We are told of immigrants coming into cities and being forced to live lives of miserable squalor and ostracism; of strikers being coerced and punished by supposedly civilized governments with unbelievable ferocity; of landowners and aristocrats being ruined by the effects of the revolution in transport and of many other technical innovations. But these ill-effects are not shown too frequently; no historian can afford to dwell on the unsuccessful.

What Stone emphasizes, and what introduces a new perspective into his account of this progress, is the decline of liberalism over the period, as well as the unexpected nature and deeply felt impact of the Great War. Through these he has tried to impose a pattern

upon an age which was packed with incident and which, even when handled as dexterously as it is here, is liable to become a catalogue of happenings. Classical liberalism is seen as being in decline for a variety of reasons. Costs had increased and the best government, according to Stone, could no longer be that which governed the least or the most cheaply. But one wonders if that is altogether correct. Austen Chamberlain, for example, who had experience of being Chancellor of the Exchequer both at the beginning of the century and after the war, found the contrast between the two periods to be extreme, and it was the war that had made the difference. Stone also argues that classical liberalism was overtaken by a new radical liberalism which regarded religion as mumbo-jumbo and was contemptuous of the past, and gives Joseph Chamberlain and Jules Ferry as examples of the new liberalism. Yet it is difficult to see either the well-known Unitarian or the French educational reformer who surrounded himself with Protestant advisers in this role. It is somewhat exaggerated to claim that "the end of the notables" took place as early as this, nor will everyone agree that the pattern which led to 1914 was laid down in the 1870s, with the classical liberals who (supposedly) abhorred armies and wars being outflanked by an alliance system which inexorably led to conflict.

Stone is on firmer ground when he talks of the socialist challenge to liberalism, although he stresses the way in which this challenge was constantly muted by the differences that occurred among socialists. In his

Balkans were set ablaze. The "amiable incompetents" could not stop the move towards world war.

Despite its modern borrowings, this rendition of the Agadir crisis has a curiously old-fashioned air. It bears a striking resemblance to the account found in that contemporary radical journal, *The Nation*, shorn of its more spectacular conspiratorial trappings. The difficulty of the radical reading, then and now, is that cause and effect are not so easily linked. As soon as Barraclough moves from the general to the specific, he begins to qualify and thereby weakens the thrust of his argument. Even his marvellous verbal facility cannot quite sustain the balancing-act between historian and Cassandra. The connections between crises at home and adventures abroad clearly exist but are far from simple. It just cannot be shown that the Monis cabinet decided to settle the Moroccan question because of unrest among the wine-growers and the industrial workers. Nor is it easy to prove that Foreign Office fears of social revolution, fuelled by the summer strikes, intensified those deep anxieties about British isolation which provoked in turn an over-dramatic and dangerous response to the German appearance at Tangiers.

Nor does the Agadir crisis clearly illustrate the malevolent influence of the "New Machiavellians". The old and new elites did not pull well together. Many of the difficulties of the German government arose from the conflicting interests of the Prussian agriculturalists and the German industrialists, further divided among themselves. Kiderlen-Wächter, the German Foreign Secretary, wanted a diplomatic victory for domestic purposes but he had no clear idea of what he should demand for compensation and what he got did not interest the concessionaires, the industrialists or the exporters. The British radicals and the socialists magnified the role of "high finance" in raising the fever-charts of Europe. The Foreign Office never doubted that the concerns of the City were different from their own. The Office wanted to use economic tools to win political battles, the financiers wanted political support for economic ends. And it is not somewhat paradoxical in view of the sinister role in which he is cast that Caillaux was the spokesman for a commercial group favouring a Franco-German bargain or that, at various

times, the Foreign Office, the Germanophobes and the socialists should all condemn the colonialism of the City firms with their international connections. In July 1914 Eyre Crowe suspected a German plot behind the City's opposition to war.

It may be the ferocities of the more recent past which lead Barraclough to paint a picture of weak and ineffective men. In the end, he returns to an old radical formula. It is not the men who are to blame but the system which imprisons them. Apart from being a method of concealing international relations, there was, and is, of course, no system. The British adherence to the balance of power in 1911 was a rationalization of specific interests. Not even Crowe, despite the strong moral element (not unlike American moralism today) in his thinking, believed this was a "law of nature". The system worked in 1911 and war was avoided because the leaders of Europe decided that it should work. The case was otherwise in 1914. Irrational fears, exaggerated hopes and unrealistic assumptions may explain this behaviour but to blame the system begs the very questions Barraclough raises.

Even those who share his belief in the relevance of past example for present practice may question the parallels drawn between 1911 and 1979. Fortunately for world peace, the American appearance off the coasts of Iran did not precipitate an Agadir crisis. The Russian move into Afghanistan was not like the Italian invasion of Tripoli. Khomeini, one assumes, still rules in Teheran and the Iraqi-Iranian war is being treated with great discretion by both the United States and the Soviet Union. The Middle East might, indeed, become the Balkans of the future but the signs are that the super-powers, despite the rhetoric, have drawn sharp distinctions between their varying involvements, to the detriment, no doubt, of countries in the Eastern bloc and in the Western hemisphere. Even in the broader sense, there are problems with Barraclough's approach. The United States seems to play all the pre-1914 roles. He argues that to divert attention from the problems of the American economy, its leaders have waved the anti-Soviet flag and looked outside their borders for distraction and relief. As with the British in 1911, fears for security in an

increasingly hostile world make Washington ever more determined to maintain its security system whatever the diplomatic cost. There is very little Union nor much recognition of the fact that a bi-polar struggle, despite the erosion at the edges, presents different problems from those of the pre-1914 multi-power world.

Barraclough is concerned above all with imperialism, past and present, and the continued great-power meddling in the affairs of weak states. Will we be involved in a catastrophic war because of some area one cannot even locate on a map? But imperial relations today are hardly as one-dimensional as the example of France and Morocco would suggest. Barraclough may be unduly pessimistic when he argues that the American have ignored the danger signals. One not at all confident how he would classify the world's nations when he registers the possibility that the conflict between imperialism and anti-imperialism will end in catastrophe.

There is a different danger for which Agadir is not a useful precedent. Diplomatic successes have rarely paid domestic dividends in the United States (witness the differing American and European reputations of Nixon and Kissinger). The country's present economic difficulties might well lead, as they did earlier, to a contraction in its world involvement, to a greater economic nationalism and a more exclusive concern with the western hemisphere and the Soviet Union. Such a withdrawal (always a possibility in a nation where Congress holds the purse-strings and plays an active role in the selection of foreign policy options) would bring disaster to Asia and Africa without diminishing the possibility of a Soviet-American confrontation. Barraclough's belief that inherently weak states should be left to find their own solutions may appear more attractive to the rich powers than the poor.

What conclusions can be drawn from this anatomy lesson? Professor Barraclough leaves no exit. No wonder he concludes by blaming the international system. If he shares the assumptions of the radical troublemakers of the past, he too optimistically views of men and nations. One may agree with his Cassandra-like warnings without finding this a convincing book.

curious that a novel by Céline should be recommended as the best guide to the spirit of the Third Republic, and one finds that it is only the notes to E. H. Carr's three-volume work on Russia that are described as "worth reading".

Dr Stone has undoubtedly impressed his personality as well as his learning on this book and although one is tempted to affect a superior wisdom and to remind him that it is not only in this period that one elite sought to replace another, it is wiser still to congratulate him on writing a lively and stimulating volume.

The planned fifteen-volume series of *Documents Diplomatiques Suisses, 1848-1945* has recently been augmented by the publication of Volume 10, covering the years 1914 to 1933 (967pp. Bern: Birkbeck, 1982, 3 7165 0422 X). The Swiss 140. 3 7165 0422 X). The original documents, presented in the original French or German, are arranged chronologically, a complete *Table méthodique*, ordered under such headings as "The League of Nations", "Bilateral relations", "General economic situation", "Economic and fiscal situation", and "Switzerland", and facilitates thematic reference. The volume, which is the eighth in the series, is edited by Memo Cerutti, Jean-Claude Favre and Michèle Seemüller under the auspices of the Commission Nationale pour la Publication des Documents Diplomatiques Suisses, the fourth in the series to be published, following earlier volumes covering the periods 1914-18, 1919 and 1925-29.

## By favour of the fixers

David Hine

POWER, and Poverty in Southern Italy: A tale of two cities  
250pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£3.50.  
0 521 23637 1

Public life, never a model of administrative rectitude, has in the past three years been virtually synonymous with political scandal. In 1980 the head of the tax inspectorate was arrested for his key role in a giant building, and the southern earthquake attracted a sorry tale of lax building regulations, inadequate rescue services, and misappropriation of relief funds. In 1981 the P-2 masonic lodge linked at a complex conspiracy of public service chiefs, bankers and public officials. More recently, the spectacular collapse of the Banco Ambrosiano has touched not just politicians but the Vatican too. And in Italy, General Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, despatched from Rome to tackle the ever more intractable problem of the Mafia, returned to the mainland in a coffin after fewer than six months in the job - his son pointing the finger of accusation at the island's Christian Democrat leaders.

Adrian to explain the degenerate state of public life, few Italians would doubt the ruling Christian Democrats bear their share of the blame. They have occupied power uninterruptedly since the war, and have their men everywhere. Where Mrs Thatcher's Conservatives dispense "lessons in realism" the Christian Democrats dispense patronage, with dramatic consequences for the public sector: bloating requirement and the rate of inflation.

This is an appropriate moment, then, for a new study of Christian Democrat power in southern Italy. It is the south that patronage assumes its most important dimensions, and here that the administration is most incompetent and corrupt. Interestingly, it is also in the south that the Christian Democrat vote has held up best in recent years. Indeed, in Palermo, the focus of Judith Chubb's excellent study, the party scored its highest vote ever in the 1980 municipal election. Excluded since the mid-1970s from power in the great urban centres of the north, the party has never managed to hold their own in the south, where a combination of poverty and *malgoverno*, exacerbated by the recession and pressure to cut public expenditure, might have been expected to boost support for the politics of the left.

It is this apparent contradiction that Chubb seeks to explain. Patronage politics cannot work unless the patron can distribute to his clients resources. If the supply of resources (jobs, appointments, administrative favours, pensions, council funds) fails to expand, or worse still contracts, as is probable during a recession, then insufficient voters will be coaxed into line. In recent years, leftist critics have eagerly anticipated the moment at which the contradictions between the neo-liberal (market-cutting) and patronage wings of Christian Democracy would explode. They will glean a little comfort from Chubb's research.

Additionally in Naples, the other city examined in the book, the Christian Democrats have been excluded from power since 1975, and their vote has fallen substantially. It is fair to explain to the author mainly in terms of their loss of access to the resources of the city machine. Yet elsewhere in the south, and particularly in Palermo, the party has held its own. So how is the survival of patronage politics to be explained when the resources it needs are being squeezed?

The answer, according to Chubb, is complex. The Christian Democrats in Palermo have many different social bases: the white-collar, middle class, almost exclusively a stage-army of appointed public officials; the petty entrepreneurial class, which is a myriad of ways from access to public credit; the granting of licences to small businesses; the Mafia, which has moved from Sicily to the south.

Yet surely there is not enough to go round, especially during recession? The number of jobs a politician has at his disposal is tiny compared to the number of *raccomandazioni* he receives, and the tens of thousands of families wanting to shift from their dying city-centre slums to far outnumber the available council flats. True, says the author, but this ignores the ideological outlook of the actors in communities like Palermo. Scarcity and poverty on the one hand, and relative social privilege on the other, create an ideology of individualism characterized above all by the conviction that improvement only comes through personal political contacts with the army of fixers and placemen who organize the vote for their political leaders. It is the politics

## Maximalists and interventionists

Percy Allum

PETER LANGE, GEORGE ROSS and MAURIZIO VANNICELLI

Unions, Change and Crisis: French and Italian Union Strategy and the Political Economy, 1945-1980  
295pp. Allen and Unwin. £20.  
0 04 331088 5

This is the first of two volumes on "European Trade Union responses to Economic Crisis" in five countries to come from the Harvard Center for European Studies. It is concerned with France and Italy whereas Volume Two will deal with Britain, West Germany and Scandinavia as well as present a general conclusion and a comparison of union responses in the five countries. The reason for grouping the countries in this way is political: in Northern Europe trade union ties are

## Seeking the sacred

Patrick McCarthy

SERGIO ZAVOLI

Socialista Di Dio  
335pp. Milan: Mondadori. L9.000.  
0019125 4

Sergio Zavoli is well known in Italy as a long-standing radio and television journalist who was a pioneer in documentary reporting on such as the American landing on the moon, before becoming president of the RAI (the Italian equivalent of the BBC) in 1980. Zavoli has written many books and his latest, *Socialista Di Dio*, is a series of reflections on his own life and on recent Italian history. Neither a piece of reporting nor a political study, this book was described by the reviewer of *Il Tempo* as a "journey through the moral and spiritual dimension of our age".

Zavoli's viewpoint is revealed by his title. He fuses a rather sentimental socialism with a post-Vatican Council Catholicism that stresses the Church's mission to mankind. Having travelled so much and written about modern innovations, he is worried that scientific man may lose himself either in space or in the anonymous urban agglomerations that have sprung up from Milan to Calcutta. The "sacred" that man seeks for is man himself, writes Zavoli; who might have been quoting from one of his heroes, Pope John Paul II.

In John Paul's world four Zavoli sees the assertion of spiritual values amidst western materialism and a beacon of hope for the Third World. The poor, he tells us, slightly sentimentally, "have not been created

of desperate hope writ large, and illuminated at the approach of every election by the announcement of new (fictitious) public jobs to be filled, and new housing blocks to be allocated. In any case, Chubb argues, many of the resources used in the distribution of patronage are non-monetary, and thus unaffected by recession, especially when the administrative machine's actions are not the rational and impartial ones of disinterested bureaucrats, but privileges won only after long struggle and political intervention.

The argument is clearly expressed and highly persuasive. A good deal of the documentation is of course thin and speculative, as is inevitable in a community where even a parliamentary commission of inquiry into the Mafia could not make its charges stick. But where evidence exists it has been painstakingly marshalled. Particularly convincing is Chubb's telling description of the difficulties faced by the left in organizing the urban poor on any basis other than that of individual hope. Protest movements against housing conditions and unemployment have

been overwhelmed by a combination of despair and the problems of allocating the few resources available. In Naples, the Communist administration has struggled against almost overwhelming odds; its attempts to get a full day's work from city employees simply provoked them into taking wholesale sick-leave, and in 1977 only the supernatural intervention of San Gennaro himself seems to have prevented a new cholera outbreak.

Where the author is less persuasive is in her ready espousal, emerging at various points in the book, of the conspiracy theory of southern backwardness: that is, the view that Christian Democracy has consciously striven to prevent the emergence of a modern economy and a political system free of patronage. In her conclusion to the Palermo section of the study, for example, she argues that "Through its political control the DC has sought to perpetuate the very conditions of resource shortage and social fragmentation upon which the survival of the system of power it has created depends." Yet the evidence is hardly conclusive. The interpretation


assumes a coherence and foresight among politicians which is improbable even in the most united of parties, let alone the DC. Many positive developments have occurred in the south over the post-war era, and neither these, nor the work of many sincere technocrats, economists and planners, can be written off as the perpetration of a gigantic and long-running fraud. The reasons for southern backwardness are more deep-rooted than political conspiracy alone. Patronage, it is true, thrives on backwardness and impedes progress, but it has enormous costs even to the Christian Democrats, both in terms of the misallocation of resources and the ever-present risk of populist frustration spilling over into a recrudescence of Fascism.

Many Christian Democrats, even those from the south, understand this only too well, and would welcome the emergence of a different system. If patronage survives, it is because no one, either on the right or the left, has any clear idea of how to make the transition to a better system without paying enormous short-term social and political costs.


mobilization in Italy, if similar in origin to that of France, took a very different form: rather than a social crisis it manifested itself as a continuous and decentralized class conflict which erupted in the factories and enabled the unions to gain control of the shopfloor from the first time, something which the French unions have never achieved. The Italian unions had, moreover, two further advantages over their French counterparts: union unity was real at the grass-roots level and not something invented by the leadership to bolster its position; and the presence of the Socialist Party in the government meant that the State was unable to use its power against the workers.

Lange, Ross and Vannicelli go on to consider the various factors which, as they see it, confirmed a strategic continuity in France and promoted strategic innovations in Italy. It would seem churlish to cross swords with this sound and sensitive analysis, but the role of institutional factors in both countries is undervalued: on the one hand, the constitutional innovations of the Fifth Republic which permitted the Gaullists to ignore the French Labour movement entirely for a decade; and, on the other, the procedures of the Italian Republic (such as legislating in committee) which gave the opposition, and in particular the PCI, a role in the policy process.

If both the French and Italian union movements have gained their objectives - the French, a left-wing government, and the Italians shopfloor organization - both also find themselves today in an impasse: the French government has been obliged to impose a policy of austerity and the Italian unions have been obliged to cede shopfloor control.



### A Treatise on Social Theory



Volume 1: The Methodology of Social Theory  
W. G. RUNCIMAN

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# Hellenic homologies

James Barr

## JOSEPH YAHUDA

Hebrew is Greek  
686pp. Becket Publications, Saint Thomas House, Becket Street, Oxford OX1 1SL. £60.  
0 7289 0013 0

What can be meant by a book the title of which asserts that "Hebrew is Greek"? It certainly stimulates curiosity. Let us make clear from the start, therefore, what its thesis is. Joseph Yahuda does not argue that Hebrew and Greek are both descended from some remote common origin. His title is meant literally. He means that Hebrew as it is is Greek as it is, or rather Greek as it was in Homeric and classical times. Historical and comparative perspectives are on the whole foreign to his view of the matter; indeed he tends to scoff at such concepts as "Semitic" and "Indo-European". The disciplines of comparative philology, its careful registration and testing of phonological correspondences and historical changes, are prime casualties of his approach. Nor does he argue that there are some words of Greek origin in Hebrew or the converse, but that Hebrew is Greek. It is not a question of influence, or borrowing, or translation, or historical development: it is a question of identity. The words of the Bible in Hebrew are Greek words. The similarities extend to grammar also: Hebrew has a dative case like Greek, an aorist tense, a middle voice, a subjunctive and an optative.

It is, therefore, just as if one were to claim that Milton's *Paradise Lost* was a text in Russian. If the reader objected that it looked very like an English poem and not at all like a piece of Russian, he would be shown a set of permutations of vowels, consonants, prefixes and terminations, from which it would emerge that each word of Milton's text was in fact a Russian word; and, since the Russian words, remarkably, added up to pretty much the same general meaning as the English had had in the first place, it would have been demonstrated that Russian and English are the same language anyway.

The key concept used by Yahuda in establishing such a relation for Hebrew and Greek is the "homology" or "homologues". Homology is the relation between a Hebrew word and one or more Greek words which mean more or less the same thing and/or correspond in form; this correspondence in form means more or less that the same letters, or reliable letters, occur in both words. Thus Hebrew *ahab* "love" is an obvious homologue of Greek *agapao*; they are not accidentally similar but are the same word. When one reads the Hebrew word in the Bible; one is reading the Greek word. Hebrew *rapha* "heal" is equally obviously the homologue of Greek *therapeuo* (whence our *therapy* comes), though it is true the first syllable of the latter has to be dropped. Such homologies constitute the main instrument of Yahuda's presentation, and hundreds of pages of the book are taken up with no more than the listing of them. For many he offers no argument or justification; rather, he simply presents the Hebrew and the Greek words in juxtaposition, as, though it was so obvious that they are the same word that no justification is needed.

The first thing to strike the reader, however, is that most of the Greek words cited have not the slightest resemblance to the Hebrew words with which they are supposed to be homologous. Hebrew *yakal* "counsel" is said to be homologous with Greek *midomai* "intend, plan". *Magen* "shield" is homologous with *hoplon* "weapon". Yahuda deals with this by means of the "interchanges" which may, he thinks, take place between the Greek form and the Hebrew form of the same word. Hebrew *k* may correspond to any of the Greek letters *g, h, k, p, t, ph, ch* and either the rough or the smooth breathing. Hebrew *b* interchanges with *b, d, g, i, m, p, u*; digamma, *ph*, *o* and either of the two breathings. Such variety obtains with more or less every one of the letters. Moreover, dialect is brought into the picture. Hebrew *bakar* "chose" does

not look very like *haireo* with (in its middle voice) the same meaning, but in Laconian and Cretan one sometimes finds a *b* where Attic has the rough breathing. Any variation found between any two dialects of Greek is valid for the establishment of a homology with Hebrew. The result is, obviously, that any word in Greek can be made to "homologize" with any word of Hebrew at all. Greek *oikos* "house" is identical with Hebrew *bayit* "house", for it was *wokos* with digamma, and *w* is the same as *b, k* is the same as *t*, while *o* is manifestly the same as *a* and the termination drops off, leaving us with *bayit*. This is a mild example. *Kabod* "glory" is the homologue of *kudos*. But *kabed* "liver", which belongs to the same root in Hebrew, homologizes with *epatos*, the genitive of the Greek word "liver". The homology with Greek thus tears apart the actual network of functional relations within Hebrew.

Why then stop with Greek? In principle Yahuda does not stop there. Other European tongues are related to Hebrew, indeed in principle they are Hebrew (and Greek). Latin *ad* and Hebrew *et*, English *over* and Hebrew *ever*, French *sur* and Hebrew *al*, are identical pairs, all easily traceable to Greek. The Indian term *mahatma*, familiar as an epithet of Gandhi, actually occurs in the Hebrew Bible, since it would be *megathumatos*, Greek and this is identical with a word in Prov. 19:19 – one of the most grotesque absurdities of this book. For the most part, however, the author leaves these remote fields untouched and concentrates on Greek. The Jebusites, the ancient inhabitants of Jerusalem, were Boeotians, as their name makes clear. Gaza, in Hebrew *Azza*, was Greek *astu* "the city", i.e. Athens, so named by the Greeks after their goddess or their metropolis.

In essence, then, Yahuda's approach is the turning back of the clock to a situation that existed before any of the modern study of language grew up. No tenet of historical and comparative philology is not violated in this work. This book belongs to the world of some century ago, when men groped towards the comparison of languages through casual similarities of words, maintaining that all languages were a form of Dutch, or that French was a dialect of Arabic, or that ancient Egyptian was a kind of Gaelic.

Hebrew is Greek equally contradicts everything perceived and affirmed by the newer linguistics also. It has no idea of a language as a system to be seen in its own right, no idea of the inner interconnections that bind the language together. Its interest is focused on only two things: on the written letters, which "interchange" with the letters of another language, and on the isolated words. There is practically nothing about syntax or about extended passages such as sentences; and this for an obvious reason, namely that even if one can see a single Hebrew word in some way as a Greek word there is no means of producing a syntactical structure for it which is other than Hebrew.

Yahuda sometimes thinks of the biblical words as a cryptogram. They are in a code which has to be cracked. He has deciphered this code. But what he offers us is not a code. A code is a set of operational rules which, once known, can be followed by others and will transmit one set of signals to another. Yahuda has no such code. Even if some other person accepted his theory and pursued it, he would still arrive at a wildly different set of "homologies". Even if Hebrew were really Greek, there would be no reason why the Greek identifications offered by him should be any more valid than any other set. The only verification for his solutions is the fact that he himself happens to have thought of these ones and not others. The importance of this will be seen shortly.

For scholarship, then, this book, though learned-looking, full of words in Greek, Hebrew and Arabic script, attractively printed, extending to nearly 700 pages in length and being correspondingly expensive to buy, is of no importance or interest. The author simply does not know what he is talking

about. But this does not mean that it is not significant as a cultural phenomenon. His whole approach exemplifies certain popular attitudes of our time. Some people will be intrigued by the idea. They will say that there must be something in it. What then are the cultural ingredients and heritages that contribute to the formation of the idea that the Hebrew Bible is written in Greek?

Language superstition is deeply engrained in the cultures of the Middle East. Popular traditions about languages support and nourish it. The rise of an accurate and disciplined linguistic science has not had much effect upon people's attitudes. The very success of comparative philology, illustrated for many by the easy accessibility of relations between Arabic and Hebrew, may have encouraged the idea that languages can be "compared" on a basis of similar meanings plus some interchange of letters, while the principle that these operations work only under strictly controlled conditions may be ignored. Thus popular language comparison flourishes: the man on the Tel Aviv omnibus may hear examples every day. People do not necessarily believe it to be true; but it continues to fascinate them. They know that the word *British* is not really composed of Hebrew *berit* and *ish* "covenant of man"; but they cannot bring themselves to forget and ignore the idea. (Reinforcement comes from religious tradition. Ancient rabbis and theologians occasionally found in the Hebrew Old Testament words that they pronounced to be Greek or Latin. Added to these is the principle that, if you can do something sometimes, you can do it all the time. This is evident in Yahuda's book. There are some Hebrew words that might be Greek, or that have been thought to be Greek: therefore all its words are Greek. There are no doubt exceptions to the regular phonological correspondences between cognate languages: because there are some exceptions, exceptions may be posited all the time.

Another major ingredient in language superstition is nationalism, tribalism and ethnocentrism. The more obvious form of this would tend to stress the uniqueness of a language like Hebrew or Arabic, or to suppose that all languages are derived from one of these. This is not Yahuda's approach. He is more of a universalist, interested in a common heritage. He began, he tells us, with a natural animosity against the Greeks as persecutors of the Jews, but his studies have made it clear that their ancient differences were fratricidal, quarrels within one family. The common language means that the literary heritage is one: Homer is as Jewish as the Hebrew Bible is Greek. The result is quite ecumenical: the Jewish, the "Christo-European" and the Islamic cultures all originate from Hellenia. This is at least well meant. Whether it is realistic must be doubtful. The obvious linguistic commonage of Hebrew and Arabic has not led very directly to peace in the Middle East. Even the universalism of our author is built upon ethnocentric perceptions. His thinking is very similar in style to that of those who suppose the British to be descended from the lost ten tribes of Israel. The Helots of Laconia were "Israelites", as the prophet Obadiah (1) makes clear. The inhabitants of Iraq (= Greek Argos), Syria and Arabia (= Greek *eremia* "desert land") are mainly Syrian and Chaldean in origin, as well as being Hittites, which is much the same sort of thing.

To these forces we must add what may be called text superstition: the belief that the essence, the fixed and basic nucleus, of a holy book lies not in the meanings, not in the message or the sense, but in the actual letters, the characters themselves. Interpretation may therefore vary quite freely, while the text is inviolable. Here Yahuda's violent rejection of scholarly opinion is significant. His main irritation with dictionaries and other scholarly works arises because he thinks they suggest corrections of the text. But corrections of the text may be motivated by respect for the integrity of the language. The language ought to make sense as

Hebrew; therefore there may be ground for supposing that scribes have at times made mistakes in copying. Yahuda, anxious for the integrity of the text, cares nothing for the integrity of the language and its network of meanings. Yet the damage done to the Bible by those who propose corrections of the text is as nothing to the violence done to it by one who rips its fabric of language and meaning to shreds by arguing that it is Greek.

It is interesting that Yahuda's theories result in comparatively little semantic change. Now and again he says that completely new translations of the Bible will be required, in order to accommodate the new visions of meaning attained once it is seen that it is in Greek. Actually, however, as a result of Yahuda's ingenuity, curiously little changes. Occasionally a novel meaning is suggested; but on the whole the Bible continues to say what it has long been understood to say. The changes are marginal. In any case he offers few actual new translations or interpretations, because his main interest is in single words and not in sentences or longer complexes.

But this only shows the naivety of the author. He displays no awareness of the weapon that he is delivering into the hands of the enemies of Judaism. Perhaps in his hands the Hebrew Bible, read as Greek, still maintains the basic truths of his religion. But anyone else who follows him and starts to read it as Greek will very likely come to a quite different set of results. There are plenty of people who are ready to exploit language fantasies as a means for attacking traditional religions. These will say: now that we know that the Old Testament is a Greek book, it is evident that it means things enormously different from what the Jews in their ignorance have thought. Take the Ten Commandments. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." But, such an interpreter will say, following Yahuda's principles, the word *lo*, usually understood as Hebrew and as meaning "not", must certainly homologize with the Homeric *ra* "indeed, verily", by familiar, easy and obvious interchanges of the letters. There is no doubt, therefore, that

Moses was enjoining polytheism – and very naturally too in the archaic Greek environment in which he and the Hebrews lived. Similarly the commandments would doubtless encourage stealing and adultery. There is nothing in Yahuda's methods to prevent such conclusions.

The fact is that anyone who interprets the Old Testament as anything other than a Hebrew book deals a serious blow at the entire structure of Judaism – and indirectly Christianity also. Judaism is built upon the understanding of the Bible as a Hebrew work. Its great authorities never for a moment dreamed it could be otherwise. Rashi did not suppose the Torah to be written in Greek, and Maimonides never thought it was other than in Hebrew. Either of these men have thought that there were half a dozen Greek words in it; but they knew, quite clearly, that all the basic networks and structures of language within the text were purely Hebrew. To throw doubt upon the Hebrew language of the Bible, to suggest that it is identical with Greek or any other language, is simply to tear apart the entire fabric of meanings and associations through which the Bible has been understood for millennia. Yet it seems not to occur to the author that this is what he is doing.

Finally, in another sense this book is an attempt to get away from no central fact about human language, namely that it exists in numerous quite different and mutually largely unintelligible languages. When God destroyed the tower of Babel, he made the languages of men unintelligible to one another. Mr Yahuda thinks that he did not do this as thoroughly as he has been supposed. Greeks and Hebrews have been speaking the same language all along, although they did not realize it. But those who told the story of the tower of Babel knew better. God made the languages of men into quite distinct entities. Perhaps, as the Christian story of Pentecost tells some day he will do something to alter this. But until then we had better accept that Hebrew is Hebrew, and Greek is Greek.

## Hiding assets

Marghanita Laski

### RANDOLPH QUIRK

Style and Communication in the English Language  
136pp. Edward Arnold, Paperback, £4.95.  
0 7131 6260 0

The reworked chapters and reviews which, with one seeming exception, make up Randolph Quirk's *Style and Communication in the English Language* have an advantage over many such collections: it is being concerned with the single subject of language. The disadvantages are the usual ones: that not only length, depth and weight have been determined by other considerations than the author's wish, but often the subject-matter too. We can hardly suppose that had Professor Quirk been planning a book on language from scratch, he would have included both a 5½-page tribute to Eric Partridge and a 9½-page chapter called "Grammatical and Pragmatic Aspects of Countability" from *Die Neuen Sprachen*. The book is, indeed, a tribute to the author's catholicity of interest in the single subject of language. But we who know less cannot hope to profit from more than a chapter here, another there.

Some of us will have hoped for most satisfaction from the pieces on dictionaries, especially after reading in the foreword, "I devote a good deal of space to dictionaries". What this sentence seems to mean is that from these many pieces Quirk could have put into this book, he chose to put in most about dictionaries. Would he had chosen more, and given us a deeper and richer survey of the subject rather

than what amounts to little more than skin over some dictionaries as available, a review of Elizabeth Murray's *Caught in the Web of Words*, and some comments on the emergence into the public domain of pomographic language once circulating in only limited words of discourse and letters.

Disappointed, then, in Quirk on Dictionaries, I found my own preferences here in comments, like the notice taken in the piece on broadcast English, of Angela Ripston's term "That's it from me." Quirk's termination is, with characteristic perversity, a piece on beginnings, or where, in a conversation that has already silently been taking place between the poet and the reader, the poet begins to speak aloud and this is the most usefully provocative piece here.

"With characteristic perversity" is reference is to a trick of Quirk's which may delight or madden. This is that he cannot leave a catch-phrase alone. He must take the roughshod of the poem smoothies," he writes of the poem "merchants, a play of quillo like, but not those like Ogden who sought to liberate people from the hiding persuaders". Why hiding and not persuaders? "Does Quirk's reference to the present rather than the past of the present imply unconscious, the words be persuaders winked out? Or – as is Quirk himself, both here and in more unitary work such as *Grammar*, who as much as any other recent writer on linguistics has led us to take no utterance at its face value. And those who enjoy this form of play, certainly like the piece in *Style and Communication* called "The Concept of English", a discussion of some of the difficulties in the way of using English as a world language; with a word of solution.

## Hosannas to the Emperor

Tony Judt

### WILLIAM H. C. SMITH

Napoleon III  
396pp. Paris: Hachette. 98fr.  
2 01 007280 4

This is the 175th anniversary of the birth of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, an insignificant mile-post recording an unremarkable event. The son of one of Bonaparte's least noteworthy brothers, he wandered the half-world of exiled princelings in the years following Waterloo, moving between Switzerland and Italy before settling in England in the 1830s. From there he launched two ludicrous, ill-planned attempts to overthrow the Orleansist monarchy, in 1836 and again in 1840. He failed and during his incarceration he wrote a variety of diatriphic pieces on everything from artillery theory to the principles of Bonapartism, all of which served to reinforce the unflattering opinions of him held by his contemporaries. At the age of forty he appeared confirmed in the marginal existence of a man without qualities, tinged off his pretensions, a name, and an inadequate income.

And then, implausibly, the political vacuum of the early Second Republic saw him elected (initially in *absentia*) first to a seat in the new Assembly and then, in December 1848, to the presidency of the infant Republic. Even then he exuded an air of marginality, the remainder in the political equation of republican France, a passing convenience to republicans and monarchists alike, scorned by both. Constrained by the new constitution to a one-term presidency, he played off his opponents with some considerable skill and not a little plotting, and in December 1851 seized power by a

sudden and violent coup. Remaining in power for nineteen years, declaring himself Emperor on the first anniversary of his coup, he imposed himself and his Second Empire upon the history of France. There he remains, an embarrassment to historians of an earlier generation because of the inglorious circumstances surrounding both his rise and his fall (at the hands of Bismarck in 1870), a problem for modern students on account of the incongruous marriage of a secondary personality (Hugo's "Napoléon le Petit") with a period of the greatest significance in the history of his country.

William H. C. Smith's book, designed as it must be for the upper end of the popular market, does little to alleviate the embarrassment or elucidate the problem. He takes Louis-Napoleon very seriously (which is no doubt perfectly proper, in a biographer), and at his word (somewhat less laudable, in this instance). All previous students of the man and his achievements are politely chastised for writing ideologically and professionally loaded accounts, and the result is a well-intentioned and wholly naive exercise in whitewash. This is a great pity, for Mr Smith is absolutely right to identify the Second Empire as a – perhaps the – seminal period in the development of modern France; the difficulty is that the evidence for this contention lies in the economic, the social and to some extent the administrative history of these two decades. Since economic, social and administrative history are something in which the author has no apparent interest (he writes as much on page 248, where he states that he is devoting a chapter to social and economic matters because it is nowadays "de rigueur" to do so), the grounds for taking him seriously must remain opaque to any reader not

already conversant with the burgeoning literature on the history of the period. A mere eighteen pages are thus sacrificed to "fashionable" concerns of a social nature, while the dirty little tale of Louis-Napoleon's interference in Mexico merits twenty-one.

This typical imbalance goes beyond considerations of space. Smith is very anxious to establish causal relations between the Emperor's occasional observations on poverty and under-consumption, and the specific economic development of the time. The raw material to hand is scarce enough – two establishments for sick workers, one orphanage and the 1864 law permitting limited workers' associations but with the further assistance of a casual suggestion by Louis-Napoleon in 1866 in favour of a workers' insurance fund (a proposal which went no further than a letter to a minister), the historian-magician produces a scrawny under-sized creature from his source-book and announces "Napoleon III, the Workers' Friend". As to the properly economic history of the Empire, there is an erroneous account of the impact of the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty (just because the Emperor's protectionist opponents were far from disinterested, it doesn't weaken the force of the arguments regarding the impact of free-commerce on, for example, France's large but vulnerable textile industry), half-a-dozen lies on the railways, and, simply nothing on Haussmann's urban construction, with its enduring impact upon Parisian social history and the national economy alike.

So much for the Empire. What of the Republic? Louis-Napoleon's rise to power is of palpable interest in its own right, and was first recognized as such by Marx, in what may regard as his best single work of political analysis and polemic (the *Eighteenth Brumaire*

of *L-N Bonaparte* is neither referred to in the text of the present work, nor listed in the otherwise full bibliography). Smith may not have grasped that Marx might have been a cardinal witness in his favour, in that both propose, erroneously, an explanation for Louis-Napoleon's electoral successes based upon the putative support of the provincial peasantry. Marx's error is forgivable, in a contemporary pamphlet, but Smith had access to evidence, primary and secondary, which could have set him right. He is wrong, too, when he writes that it would be a mistake to think provincial voters were under the illusion that they were voting for the great Napoleon – I have seen invalid ballot papers for the elections of 1848 which show that this illusion was indeed present, if not widespread (at least one ballot in Provence contained the handwritten vote for Louis Napoleon...).

The deeper error shared by Marx and William Smith is to suppose that the rural support for Bonaparte's nephew suggested a conservative, or at least "bonapartist", sentiment, in contrast to the emerging republicanism of the cities. Many of the communities of rural France which supported Louis-Napoleon for president in December 1848 voted solidly for the far left of the republican movement in the legislative elections of the following year. This is no minor quibble – it suggests a certain instrumentality to the 1848 vote, with the person of Louis-Napoleon serving as a passing symbol for the discontents of those, rural and urban alike, who were disillusioned with the halted progress of social improvement under the régime, of which so much had been hoped.

By misinterpreting the evidence for the degree of national enthusiasm for his protagonist, Smith is able to advance the preposterous notion that the December 1851 coup was a minor

affair, something the president just had to do, and in which France was "not victim, but accomplice" (one of many historical clichés in this work). This is embarrassing, suggesting as it does a total ignorance of the impressive body of monographic research on the coup in recent years. The scale of the provincial opposition to Louis-Napoleon's wanton overthrow of the constitution in his quest for power (and money – he needed to stay in office), the extent of the ensuing repression, the enduring memory and the shadow cast thereby over the history of the Empire born of violence and illegality: all this is massively documented in English and French alike – it even provided the historical locus for the opening novel in Zola's Rougon-Macquart series. Without the bitterness and the reactions surrounding the events of December 2, 1851, the history and historiography of the Second Empire are quite beyond comprehension – why then perhaps explain why Smith finds it all perplexing.

If it seems a little harsh to so condemn a worthy desire to say nice things about Napoleon III, there is one point that one might make in defence of the present exercise. Conservative and traditional as he is (not least in his preference for diplomatic history, which occupies much of the book), the author strives for a revisionist interpretation *à outrance*. This is no mere apology, much less a hagiography. The penultimate sentence quotes a *bon mot*, a throwaway line from Victor Cousin, suggesting that Hugo misidentified Napoleon le Petit – "Napoleon le Petit est celui de la colonne". And Mr Smith ends by suggesting that we ponder upon the truth of this suggestion. To any of us who have ever been tempted to rewrite the past to the point of counter-intuition, this *reductio ad absurdum* of revisionist history can stand as a warning and an example.

## At the feet of the Father

Michael Ignatieff

ALETTE FARGE and MICHEL FOUCAULT (Editors)

Le Désordre des familles: Lettres de cachet des Archives de la Bastille  
396pp. Paris: Gallimard. 79fr.  
2 01 007362 6

Historians know the *lettre de cachet* from its most famous victims: Diderot and de Sade; and from the great speeches made against it as a hated symbol of royal arbitrariness by Mirabeau and others in the early days of the Revolution. It is a surprise to discover from this collection of documents dating from the years 1728 and 1758 that its most numerous victims were not the libertine scions of the great or the king's philosophical enemies, but drunken husbands of poor market-women, the deranged and profligate wives of long-suffering bakers and the debauched and disobedient sons of petty tradesmen. In the grandiloquent phrases which the *lettre de cachet* would concoct on their behalf, the poor of Paris would "throw themselves at the feet" of their Sovereign, petitioning him to imprison a relative whose conduct was forfeiting the "honour" of their family.

The poor used the *lettre de cachet* for exactly the same reason as the rich: to avoid the costs, delays and ignominy of public judicial proceedings. What was to condemn the institution in the eyes of the reluctant revolutionaries of 1789 – the secret, arbitrary and extralegal character of the proceedings – was precisely its attraction for rich and poor alike. While the rich could appeal directly to the King in Council, the poor had to tread a more circuitous route, through the office of the local *lieutenant de police*. It was up to him to interview the complainants, take corroborating statements from neighbours, and forward a dossier to the King which would sift the grain of truth from the chaff of recrimination.

As the editors point out, the petitions in this collection bear witness to a poignant pantomime in which

some of the King's most wretched subjects acted out the griefs and resentments of their intimate family life before his unseen gaze, speaking the backhanded lies provided by the *derivain public*. The formulas of address were strict: these petitions are complex representations of suffering, not its brute actuality. It was not enough for a husband to claim that his wife had run off with another man. In order to procure her confinement, he had to convince the King that she had become a whore and a public nuisance. The King's business was not with infidelities but with anything that could be construed as a threat to his civil order. Hence only "public" sexuality had a claim upon his attention. Likewise, a wife seeking the confinement of her husband had to show not only that he was a drunkard, but that he had neglected his functions as a father to her children, and that he had pawned the matrimonial bed to pay for his vicious habits. Only such baroque extremes of misconduct were likely to catch the monarch's mercurial but fateful attention.

Alette Farge and Michel Foucault point out that the King listened equally to wives as well as husbands. His intervention, in other words, was for the sake of the family and its honour, not for the sake of the authority of the father and husband. In cases where the family patriarch was a drunk, the King sided with the long-suffering wife and her children. Significantly too, the King's order of imprisonment did not strip the family of its obligations to the confined. It was the family which was held responsible for the board and maintenance of their prisoner, while in confinement, and it was up to them to petition the King for his release once suffering had brought him back to his senses. In effect, the families of the poor used their petitions to beguile their Sovereign into making them a gift of his oppression to help them regain that precious intangible: honour.

The monarchy of the *ancien régime* may have been clumsy and inefficient by modern administrative standards, but it had an awesome reservoir of legitimacy in its command of the paternal registers and practices of

authority. Reading these petitions which link the ineffably distant Father to the most miserable of his people, one begins to grasp the full implications of regicide.

How then did an institution so useful to the poor, so profoundly legitimated in the paternal language of power, become a hated symbol of monarchical despotism in 1789? The documents suggest that it was in the People's name that Mirabeau condemned the institution in 1789, it was hardly with their full-throated support. Justice, the rule of law, not of men, is an austere ideal for the ordering of the state's dealing with civil society, more likely to appeal to philosophers and

revolutionaries than ordinary people, especially those who had never lived under any rule but that of a Father. If it was in the name of justice that the *lettres de cachet* stood condemned, it was a condemnation whose sense might well have escaped Frenchmen used to a Father who was arbitrary and fallible, but also an solicitous, sentimental and beguiling as fathers are. The new republic was no respecter of persons or their singular griefs. It had no dealings with families, only with individuals. Its business was with infractions of its laws, not with the private and non-justifiable miseries of family life. It had no business with family honour. If the vernacular of family honour disappeared from the

language of the nineteenth-century poor, it may have been because there ceased to be anyone in authority to whom it could be addressed.

If the paternal state implied in the *lettres de cachet* lost its legitimacy before the austere ideal of the just republic, the right of the Father to intervene in the family lost out to a new domination between public and private spheres. In withdrawing from the regulation of family conflict, the state made a tacit bargain with the father and the husband in which the mother, wife and daughter lost their right of appeal to higher authority. In the Revolution, the Father was toppled from his throne. Afterwards there were only fathers.

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# The Georgian mentality

David Walker

THOMAS A. MARKUS (Editor)

Order in Space and Society: Architectural Form and its Context in the Scottish Enlightenment 322pp, Edinburgh: Mainstream, £20. 0 906391 29 6

This handsome volume, mainly the product of the University of Strathclyde's Department of Architecture and Building Science – and thus with something of a Glasgow bias – consists of an introduction and four essays devoted to architecture, supplemented by a fifth on the social background and the political and philosophical thought of the time as illustrated in its literature. Considerably more than half the book has been written by Thomas A. Markus himself. It is he who contributes the two major essays and sets the theme of the book, with its emphasis on form, space and order, both in the cities as a whole and in the development of new building types, in the context of the social, political, industrial and philosophical trends of later Georgian times.

Markus's first essay, "The Sad, The Bad and The Mad", a study of Edinburgh and Glasgow hospital, courthouse, prison and asylum architecture, takes the themes of Helon Rosenau's *Social Purpose in Architecture* and develops them a good deal further in a Scottish context, with many excellent hitherto unpublished illustrations. The section devoted to prisons provides a supplement of much more than merely Scottish interest to

Robin Evans's *The Fabrication of Virtue: English Prison Architecture 1750-1840*: the story of the development and eventual partial abandonment of Bentham's panopticon principles in Robert Adam's Edinburgh Bridewell is fully told, while the competitive projects by Robert Stark, David Hamilton and William Reid for the Glasgow Justiciary Buildings are at least well illustrated even if one regrets that the briefs for what were clearly two separate projects have not been found. The later developments at Duke Street Prison, Glasgow, are, however, very scrappily culled from maps when the main facts are not too hard to find (radial wings 1824-5, enlargement of the original block by Robertson, 1838-9, general rebuilding by Salmon, 1871, and Carrick, 1874). Moreover the essay is less comprehensive than it might be: Robert Reid's Edinburgh Justiciary complex in Parliament Square, raised up on a massive substructure of grim carceri, and the Glasgow-type complexes at Ayr and Perth are absent, as is Reid's Perth Prison, historically significant as the first in Scotland where the radial concept was realized in actual building (1810-12).

The integrated radial planning in Baxter's plan of 1791 for the Edinburgh Bridewell, borrowed, as Evans has shown, from Blackburn's Salford prison, was to reach its fullest realization, coupled to a rigid hierarchical classification of the patients, in Stark's Glasgow Asylum, designed in 1807. Markus's account of asylum development, excellent though it is on Stark, is, however, only half the story. The pioneer asylum at Montrose, begun in 1780 and one of

the largest building projects then being undertaken in Scotland, long demolished and as yet unstudied, is not discussed; neither is Burn's Perth Murray Royal in relation to the Crichton Royal at Dumfries (1834), which, as Markus shows, is closely derived from Watson's Perth's Wakefield example of 1815. Perth is twelve years earlier and essentially similar, but with three arms instead of four. All three of his building types might usefully have been examined more closely in terms of architectural expression as well as of plan. The Frenchness of Hamilton's Glasgow Courthouse designs is not examined, nor is the pioneering of the Greek Doric order hard on the heels of the Smirke at Covent Garden in both the Hamilton and Stark designs, while the clear relationship between Stark's executed courthouse and Thomas Harrison's at Chester in their colonnaded hemicycle courtrooms is not picked up. To a lesser degree the same might be observed of the hospital section. The close resemblance in general arrangement between the central pavilions of William Adam's Edinburgh Infirmary (begun 1738) and Soufflot's Hôtel Dieu at Lyons (designed 1740) is hardly likely to be wholly accidental and suggests the possibility of some radical re-design before completion in 1748, even though Adam had already shown interest in French square-domed central pavilions at his Edinburgh Orphan Hospital of 1734 and George Watson's Hospital (a grander institution for the children of merchants) of 1738-40.

Markus's second essay, "The School as Machine", similarly begins with Benthamite concepts but the cylinder and the polygon soon gave way to the

plainest of machine-shop rectangles, most of these devoid of formal architectural quality in the conventional sense, the interest being in the arrangements of floors and furnishings devised to meet the needs of the monitorial or pupil-teacher system. The inter-relationship of London and Scottish methods in their development, from Andrew Bell, Joseph Lancaster and Robert Owen onwards is well studied. The Glasgow educationist David Stow emerges as the major figure, in Scotland at least, from the 1820s onwards. Both his Glasgow "Normal" schools had architectural pretensions usually reserved for the grander burgh and endowed schools (but why is the Free Church school ascribed to Charles Wilson rather than Thomas Burns?) and his highly influential *Training System* ran through nine editions from 1836 to 1853, the last including a design for London sites with an open arcade play area at the ground floor, an idea frequently adopted in later board schools on cramped sites. The original idea was not, however, Stow's but that of Alexander Black, the Heriot Trust's architect who built several schools in Edinburgh on this principle from 1839 onwards. Excellent though Markus's essay is, it is important to bear in mind that it represents only one aspect of nineteenth-century Scottish education, even if the most influential one.

Peter Reed and Frank Walker contribute complementary essays on the New Town developments in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Reed's Edinburgh essay is the weakest in the book, both historically and critically, and hardly takes us as far as A. J. Youngson's *The Making of Classical Edinburgh* or Ian G. Lindsay's *Georgian Edinburgh*, concentrating on an attempt to interpret the several developments in terms of a neo-

classical formal code of place and route (where to use palace fronts and emphasize corner pavilions) which is really only fully valid on Robert Brown's Walker estate developments. Frank Walker writes on the Glasgow gridiron with far greater perception and feeling, and his detailed elucidation of the formalization and enlargement of the eighteenth-century contribution to our knowledge, as the western extension over Blythswood Hill, even if he leaves the full extent of James Gillespie Graham's involvement in the later phases to a fuller investigation of the Blythswood cemetery.

The weakness of any collection of essays such as this is that it is liable to present an incomplete and unbalanced picture. Markus's book covers only a few aspects of Scottish late Georgian order in space and society. He emphasizes in his introduction the influence of the architecture of the first machine age, with the hierarchical and systematic order imposed upon it by transmission from a central power source, yet the subject is neither included nor developed. Similarly absent, and quite fundamental to his subject, is the development of commercial architecture, the re-ordering of the central urban fabric into bank and insurance office, business chambers, and wholesale and retail warehouse and shop spaces from the owner's residence, even if these emerging building types did not fully achieve individual identity until the late 1830s, 1840s and 1850s. In the context of these omissions Andrew Noble's fine if somewhat depressing essay, "Versions of Scottish Pastoral", is something of a luxury, but perhaps Markus and his colleagues yet have to mind to complete the picture.

## The manufacturing side

John Hume

ANDREW GIBB

Glasgow: The Making of a City 197pp, Croom Helm, £12.95. 0 7099 0161 5

Andrew Gibb's new historical geography of Glasgow is a highly condensed, but readable, summary of the city's history since prehistoric times. It highlights the problem of drawing dividing lines between historical geography and social and economic history, as much of the substance of the book is fairly straightforward local history and is based on conventional historical sources. The first two chapters are well done. The geographical and geological setting of the city is succinctly and clearly analysed, and the evidence for the early settlement of the area clearly set out. Medieval Glasgow, emerging as an organized community with both a merchant and an ecclesiastical base, is sketched in a lively and informative manner, with the geographical relations carefully analyzed both textually and cartographically, though marred slightly by seventeenth-century allusions and illustrations.

Until the end of the sixteenth century, Glasgow does not appear to have been markedly different from other small ecclesiastical settlements. The Reformation, with the end of Church influence on land ownership, seems to have stimulated Glasgow's merchants to develop trade with Ireland and later with the Continent. In the Cromwellian period Glasgow, together with Bonness, was Scotland's second port, as measured by Customs and Excise returns, though both were a long way behind Leith. The most interesting part of this section is the discussion of the changes of street layout and style of building.

After the Union of the Parliaments in 1707, the historical sources for Glasgow's history improve. Relying heavily on Gibson's *History of Glasgow* (1777), Gibb analyzes the trade of the city in the 1770s. He chronicles the rise of the tobacco trade and the industrial expansion of the city, though curiously, he ignores McJure's pioneering account of 1736. The

analysis of the physical development of Glasgow to 1776 and the cartographic presentation of its westward expansion from the 1750s are good. After the American War of Independence there is an embarrassingly large amount of source material, which the author uses in an eclectic and illustrative way. A rather lengthy account of river, railway and canal-building, and their impact on the city, contrasts with the complete omission of road improvement. The account of industrial expansion is disappointing. Cotton-mill-building is dismissed without any serious discussion, and a careful analysis of directory evidence leads the author to conclude that "over 270 concerns (218 textile) had invaded streets opened as select residential enclaves only a few decades before". This is true but, on the whole, they were seeking office and limited warehouse accommodation, rather than manufacturing premises. The rapid expansion of the built-up area of the city is competently surveyed, though one might quibble about the description of some developments in the west as "unplanned". The vital importance of water supply to the extension of the built-up area of the city is only hinted at. Housing development, however, failed to keep pace with population expansion, and Gibb rightly concludes his chapter with a description of the environmental problems created, and the ravages caused by unchecked epidemics.

"Iron in the Soul – 1841-1914" is a curious title for a chapter on Victorian and Edwardian Glasgow. Certainly the city was much affected by the enormous expansion of the Lanarkshire iron-smelting industry between 1830 and 1870, by the rise of iron-shipbuilding on the banks of the Clyde below the city, and by the rapid diversification of iron-based manufacture. The major characteristic of the city during this period was, however, its emergence as a genuinely broadly based manufacturing, commercial and social organism, providing a wide range of support services for the surrounding industrial towns and villages. It became one of the greatest of the Victorian cities without drawing in the satellite towns, and its commercial and civic institutions were enormously influential. Instead of analysing these phenomena, Gibb relies on Sydney

Checkland's idiosyncratic and polemical analysis in *The Uppas Tree* to criticize the city for something it did not do – at least until after 1905 when it absorbed the major industrial burghs down-river – which was to rely overmuch on heavy industry. The distinction between the city and its independent suburbs is not clearly made, though here Gibb follows earlier analysts of Glasgow's nineteenth-century history. Curiously in his work on historical geography there is no map showing the boundaries of the areas involved. The important systematic development of both middle-class suburbs and of working-class areas is glossed over, as is the vital part played by railways and tramways in changing settlement patterns. Most substantial and indeed the best section of this chapter is that on public health, but this relies heavily on a handful of excellent secondary sources.

The First World War, which, it has recently been argued, had a traumatic effect on the economy of the West of Scotland, is not touched on. Most of the final chapter, apart from references to inter-war housing and industry, is devoted to post-war housing and movements in population. There are good summary maps illustrating the major geographical changes in housing, in the rehabilitation of the east end of the city, and of the central business district, and an analysis of change which, owing to the sources used and presumably reasons of space, is aggregative rather than analytic. The conclusion emphasizes, perhaps rightly, the major preoccupation of the volume, housing and housing conditions.

Gibb has done a notable service to Glasgow in drawing together, for the first time since the Third Statistical Account of the city was published in 1938, the threads of a great mass of published work. He has dipped, often tentatively, into the vast body of manuscript materials which the activities of Richard Dell, Michael Moss and many others have saved and catalogued. He has shed some new light on old problems, and his study of the early period of the city's history is excellent, as are his maps and illustrations. What he has not done, however, is to carry through his programme of geographical analysis rigorously into the later chapters, and to see the city as a community.

illustrations had been designed as complementary to the text, and they provided for the eye that same liveliness as Piggott's writings had furnished for the mind. Alas, they have been replaced by photographs of sites which are inevitably static and lifeless.

On the second point, that of revision, this had become most necessary on matters of chronology. The original essay was written before the crucial importance of radiocarbon estimates for British prehistory had become widely understood. It is a pity that the author had not adopted the phrase "archaeologically unacceptable" for certain estimates for the Neolithic. In part this was because he was the major proponent of excessively short chronologies for the British Neolithic as well as for the Scottish Iron Age. Radical changes were needed here and they have been made wholeheartedly. There is a concise statement of the significance of carbon-dating: the introduction of Neolithic farming practices to Britain now goes back before 4,000 BC; and the Scottish Iron Age begins in the seventh, not the first, century BC.

Finally, to the major innovation of the present edition: Dr Ritchie's illustrated gazetteer of 255 outstanding prehistoric sites, which comprises half the book. Since Scotland possesses, at a guess, 50 per cent of the most spectacular and best-preserved monuments in Britain as a whole, the task of selecting a suitable list must have been difficult in the extreme. It says much for Ritchie's wide-ranging knowledge and catholic taste that his choice can be so good. The gazetteer includes a note on the relevant Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 map and the National Grid Reference of each site, it constitutes an invaluable guide for both the dedicated amateur of archaeology and the more casual tourist.

Derek Cooper's *Skye*, which was first published in 1970, has recently been reissued in paperback by Routledge and Kegan Paul (242pp, £5.95, 0 7100 9565 1). The book is a guide to the history and topography of the island and it provides a reading list and an anthology as well as a gazetteer of photographs and maps.

## In the beginning

Leslie Alcock

STUART PIGGOTT

Scotland Before History With a Gazetteer of Ancient Monuments by Graham Ritchie 195pp, Edinburgh University Press, £11.50 (paperback £5.75). 0 85224 348 0

In 1958, twelve years after his election to the Abercromby Chair of Prehistoric Archaeology at Edinburgh, Stuart Piggott distilled his knowledge and interpretation of Scottish prehistory into an essay of about 100 pages. This was at once vivid, lucid and humane; and it was further embellished by drawings by Keith Henderson that were both charming and lively. After an immediate reprinting, the book was unfortunately allowed to disappear, and in recent years it has become a collector's piece.

Edinburgh University Press has now had the happy idea of reprinting the essay, rejuvenated where necessary by Professor Piggott with the collaboration of Graham Ritchie, the most eminent of the middle generation of Scottish prehistorians. In welcoming their new edition, one looks at once at two points: how much that was good in the original has been preserved; and how much that needed it has been revised.

The greatest value of the 1958 version apart from the taken-for-granted virtue that it was academically impeccable – was that its subject-matter was not pots and pans, sticks and stones, but people. With brilliant clarity, Piggott displayed the changing landscapes of hills and lowland, sea and river, which human beings had moved into and through, and which they had exploited for a living over a span of thousands of years. We saw them, in their various ways at different periods; earning a living by fishing or farming; burying their dead, often in spectacular tombs; making tools, weapons and ornaments of flint or bronze or iron; defending themselves in forts or tower-like brochs. All this flow of life is no less vigorous in the new edition. But there has been one sad loss. Henderson's

## Overriding interests

Ann Ryan

N. MACCORMICK

Legal Right and Social Democracy: Essays in Legal and Political Philosophy 270pp, Oxford: Clarendon Press, £17.50. 0 19 825385 0

As we begin with last things first. Neil MacCormick's title by no means refers to or expresses any attachment to, the Social Democratic Party; Professor MacCormick has long been one of the intellectual ornaments of Scottish nationalism, and while his preface reminds us that this collection of essays was commissioned, and its title decided on, before the heady days of the *Independence Declaration*, the final essay, "Nation and Nationalism", is an eloquent reminder that the most devoted of liberal individualists must look in his heart for the national identities of the individuals whose values he values. Although MacCormick spends some time arguing that nationalism, at least among the Scots, is not the post-French Revolutionary invention which so many histories of nationalism claim it is, he also appeals to that great defender of the principles of 1789, Immanuel Kant, to support his insistence that nationality and individuality are entirely consistent. The Kantian ideal of respect for persons implies an obligation in each of us to respect that which in others constitutes any part of their sense of self-identity. For many people, though quite probably not for all, a sense of belonging to some nation is an element in this precious fabric of identity. For the rougher and more chauvinistic sorts of nationalism, of course, MacCormick has nothing to say; though those who are deeply read

in Scottish history no doubt have a different view of who the chauvinists are from those of us who think it's a disease of Scottish football fans and Welsh philosophy fans.

Not very much of *Legal Right and Social Democracy* is concerned with such things, or at any rate not very directly. Since the book consists of a collection of already published, though much revised, essays, its unity is somewhat precarious – there are essays on the nature of rights, on the nature of political obligation, on Rawls and justice, on the connections between privacy and obscenity, and on the role of coercion in the law; these are, of course, pretty much the standard issues of legal theory, and the mere fact that an author tackles most of them tells one little about how his treatment of them does or does not cohere. In fact there is a guiding thread of a sort in all this, and it is one which explains why MacCormick is rightly reluctant to surrender his title to any political party. Social democrats, by which I mean mean people who accept the mixed economy, the welfare state, and parliamentary democracy as intrinsically good things, and not mere stepping-stones on the way to a Marxist utopia, find themselves awkwardly hemmed in by their enemies. To the right they find writers like Robert Nozick or F. A. von Hayek, who claim that any society which respects rights is barred from running a welfare state, barred from managing the economy, barred from trying to secure distributive justice in incomes and wealth; to the left they find socialists who are decidedly sceptical of the whole idea of individuals having rights at all – distinguishing Marxist theorists like E. B. Pashukanis and a flock of critics of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* among them. To argue that individuals do have rights, that the main task of a decent government is to protect those rights, but that those rights do not include absolute and outright ownership of the resources

in essence, what MacCormick does is defend what is generally called an

"interest" theory of rights. What it is to have a right is to have an interest in the getting of some benefit, or the doing of some action, or whatever it might be, of such importance that it would be wrong to deny that interest satisfaction whatever other advantages accrued from that denial. The obvious example which favours the interest theory is that of the rights of children. The so-called "will theory" of rights, which insists on the ability of the right-holder to waive, transfer, or stand on his rights, cannot see infants as the possessors of rights. Certainly parents have duties towards children, but children do not really have rights – save in so far as we are inclined to see rights in the shadow cast by others' duties towards them. To many people, this seems quite plausible; it seems much more plausible to say that parents' duties stem from children's rights than to make the whole thing hang on parents' duties. At all events, as MacCormick says, "it certainly does not seem to me in any way objectionable to say that it is because children have a right to care and nurture that parents have the duty to care for them. There might be other grounds (eg. saving taxpayers' money) for imposing such a duty on parents or on whomsoever it may be imposed, but recognition of children's rights is one distinctive reason for doing so."

This does, of course, leave us needing some sort of account of what the basis of moral rights is. MacCormick does not go very far along that track; but he does do a number of other things of considerable relevance to the task. In a chapter on "Civil Liberties and the Law" he argues against invoking natural law in order to constrain governments to respect the liberties of their subjects; he is a legal positivist who agrees with H. L. A. Hart in thinking that much law is not as it should be, and that *ius cogens* *lex est* is false in fact and bad legal theory. This is not to say that the British legal system must accept as binding in British courts legalized oppression practised elsewhere; but

what British courts must do is recognize the distinction between legal validity and genuine justice. In another essay on "Voluntary Obligations", he shows how an interest theory of rights will account for the fact that making a promise gives the promisee a right – a necessary step in his case for the interest theory, since promising is in many ways the case most favourable to a "will theory" of rights. Where the theory sees the promisor transferring to the promisee a right which the promisor formerly had, the interest theory concentrates on the expectations knowingly aroused in the promisee. To my mind, this does not work very satisfactorily, since there will be many situations in which we make promises whose breach does not matter much, yet where we feel that the promisee's rights have certainly been ignored. MacCormick to some extent gets round this by introducing the idea that breaking a promise shows lack of respect to the promisee, so that the rather special interest we all have in being shown "respect for persons" props up the perhaps rather unspecial interest we have in, say, getting the cup of tea we were promised. This, of course, raises the much larger question of whether there is a coherent moral theory to be constructed out of the Kantian apparatus of "respect for persons" combined with the utilitarian apparatus of "interests".

Still, scepticism about the viability of that project ought not to stand in the way of our agreeing that such a moral theory would provide a plausible basis for a social democratic jurisprudence. John Stuart Mill's insistence that *On Liberty* and the socialism of some parts of his *Principles of Political Economy* were all of a piece suggests that Professor MacCormick has been working in one of the best traditions of Scots social thought. Nor ought it to stand in the way of our recognizing the very many virtues of these essays, among which clarity, liveliness, generosity and independent-mindedness are merely the first four to come to mind.

## Good for some

Philip Pettit

CHRISTOPHER LLOYD (Editor)

Social Theory and Political Practice Walton College Lectures 1981 200pp, Oxford: Clarendon Press, £10.50 (paperback, £4.95). 0 19 827447 5

The centrepiece of this collection of lectures is Amartya Sen's elegant paper on the objectivity of social science. Sen begins with a point that holds also for natural science: that truth is not enough, in a scientific account of things; to guard against the possibility of the account being false, the account must also be, by some objective criteria, a good one. This is a scandal in natural science, since scientists of goodness – generally, and the like – can be derived from its predictive goal. But is it a scandal in social science? It would seem so, for, as Sen stresses, there is not the same uniformity of what he calls "use-interests" among social scientists. What will be a good account by one person's use-interest and criteria may be a bad one by another's. Sen himself plays down this scandal, preferring to insist that it remains an objective matter whether, given use-interests and criteria, an account is a good one or not. He stresses the objectivity of social theory and does not speak to its heterogeneity.

Sen's argument is that if we individualise social accounts by use-interest as well as subject-matter, we shall find ourselves able to countenance apparently conflicting accounts as compatible: that is a good account of X given use-interest Y, but a good account given use-interest Z. But if such ecumenism saves objectivity, it does so only by admitting that it is not. It is not a problem, for even if competing social theories admit the compatibility of their relativized claims, they will still disagree about which use-interest is the appropriate one to serve.

Tom Bottomore offers some historical illumination on the issue, arguing that as a matter of fact – and without a compromise of objectivity – the best social theory has usually been designed to make sense of a general crisis: in Marx's case, the rise of a new industrial working class; in Weber's and Durkheim's, certain threats to their respective nation-states. But we need prescription, not description, and the question remains: what use-interest ought social theorizing to serve?

In different ways, and despite other differences in their views, Charles Taylor and John Dunn argue for the same response. They urge, in the hermeneutic manner familiar from Habermas and his forerunners, that social theory is destined for social consumption by people who are already social agents and, in an amateur way, social thinkers. Social theory, they say, ought to be designed to take this into account. Its use-interest is its interest for an audience engaged in the continuing process of more or less reflectively reproducing and reshaping inherited collective practices. As natural science produces theories which help us to achieve predictive control over nature, so social science ought to produce theories which will help us to achieve political fulfilment.

It is reasonably clear that this conception of the use-interest of social theory rules out as irrelevant any theories whose endorsement would leave people in the role of catonian observers of the historical process; Taylor, Sen and Dunn will be certain "macro-functional" analyses, for example. Dunn stresses that the full social theory will not impair the adequacy of people's understanding of themselves as intentional agents. But can we be more positive in saying what the conception permits? Can we specify, not just marks of theoretical poverty, but a criterion of what a good theory would be?

Both Taylor and Dunn offer pious words on the matter. Taylor, "good theory enables practice to become less

stumbling and more clairvoyant". Dunn, "to implement such a vision in practice (supposing it to be accurate) would be above all to discover how in practice we could trust one another to co-operate". One is reminded of Monsignor Ronald Knox's desire for a proof of God's existence which would bring those who understood it to their knees.

I find the formulations plous, because they each suggest that there is a determinate and uncontested criterion of theory-choice on offer. But this is not so, as the writers in question would acknowledge. There will be as many views of when clairvoyant practice or rational co-operation is in prospect as there are political philosophies. The real upshot of the line of thought conducted by Taylor and Dunn is that any social theorist who is very impressed by the standard examples of what it is to have a right is likely to think the welfare state is organized charity, not justice; but anyone who thinks it is demeaning and degrading to be treated as a petitioner for charity will also think we should think differently about rights.

David Marquand's essay on the collapse of ideological consensus in British politics underscores the worry. Under circumstances where political philosophies clash, there is no common ground to be found or fought for in social theory. Yet it is as well to have that fact out in the open. If we are aware of it, we are less likely to be misled by attempts to dress up political preferences as merely technical departures: for example, attempts to sell political minimalism in the guise of monetarist economics.

This is a welcome publication. The contributions vary in style and difficulty of access but the volume has a surprising coherence. The pieces by Taylor, Sen and Dunn will be particularly important in future debates about the nature of social science. I have not mentioned two of the lectures, one by Ralf Dahrendorf and the other by Włodzimierz Brus: the first is a reflection on the difficulty of "marrying" social theory and governmental practice; the second, a discussion of the utility of the Marxist perspective in analysing communist regimes. The collection also contains a helpful introduction by the editor.

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# The roaring borstal boy

Patricia Craig

E. H. MIKHAIL (Editor)

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BRENDAN BEHAN

After the Wake  
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During his lifetime, Brendan Behan's exploits tended to obscure his achievements; since his death, there have been many attempts to redress the balance, to find a place for him in the field of Irish letters on the strength of an interesting autobiography and two exuberant plays. How far is the effort justified? It is well known that drink and gregariousness eroded Brendan Behan's capacity for concentration; his literary output dwindled after *The Hostage*, and then stopped altogether. Promises and obligations were not fulfilled. Behan's mistake, you might say, was to cast himself in a part that took him over: that of the unruly Irishman. His sense of performance was always stronger than his ambition to write effectively.

Behan easily converted the incidents of his past into a series of pungent stories. Here you see him at six weeks, outside Kilmalham Gaol, held up in his mother's arms for the benefit of his father whose cell window overlooks the spot. Ireland is in the throes of a civil war, and Stephen Behan is serving a sentence for political activities. Next you have the hardy eight-year-old suppling porter with his grandmother in a Dublin slum. At sixteen he is sent to borstal in Suffolk after being caught in Liverpool with a parcel of bombing equipment. *The Irish Times* of February 9, 1940, contained a report of Brendan Behan's trial: "he made a statement to the effect that he was a member of an organization, and that he would blow up places if he got the chance". This, in fact, if it's reported accurately, amounts to nothing more than a piece of bragadoocio; the IRA at that time considered Behan something of a security risk, and packed him off to England as a way of keeping him out of mischief at home.

As far as Brendan Behan was concerned, Irish Republicanism and socialism went hand in hand; he called himself a proletarian. He claimed to get on best with "ordinary blokes", taxi-drivers, house-painters, bookies' runners, and so on. Flourescent, of course, was the trade followed by his father, and by himself before literature and self-dramatization gave him a way out of it. At one point - according to another celebrated anecdote - Behan was employed on a decorating job outside the *Irish Times* building, and on a wetting job inside it. If his copy was late, the editor would throw open a window and roar at the workman standing on the scaffolding. "Behan, come up here and write your story. We're close on to deadline."

This tale, as related by Walter Hackett, appeared in the *Washington Post* in March 1964, two days after Brendan Behan's death. Hackett's piece is reprinted, along with many others, in E. H. Mikhail's two-volume collection of Behan material. Newspaper reports, extracts from memoirs, transcripts of interviews and snippets of Behan's own prose have been assiduously assembled; you are left with a feeling that the views of everyone who knew the author, of those times, were solicited at one time or another by every newspaper editor in the business. The resulting comments are not always marked by shrewdness or perspicacity. Going back to Behan's borstal days, you have the impressions of C. A. Joyce, Governor of that institution, diligently recorded for the *Sunday Press*: "Brendan was a good boy at heart and he loved his religion".

This wasn't an isolated opinion, ingenious though it seems. Shortly after his release from borstal in November 1941, Behan began a

fourteen-year sentence after being convicted of attempted murder by the Special Court in Dublin. (He spent four years in Mountjoy Gaol before being freed in a general amnesty for political offenders.) Like C. A. Joyce, Behan's new prison Governor was struck by the mildness of the would-be assassin's manners: "basically", he assures us, the young Republican "was a very gentle person who in his senses would not hurt a fly". In Mountjoy Prison Behan brushed up his Irish and placed an article, "I Become a Borstal Boy", with Sean O'Faolain's periodical *The Bell*. All this time, he was gathering the ingredients of his plays and stories, as well as acquiring a background wholly in keeping with his instinct for theatricality. Talent is especially intriguing when its occurrence is unexpected; and Behan made the most of his unique standing as an ex-convict and ex-labourer with a literary bent.

He did this, at least in part, by poking fun at it; fortunately the most pronounced of his gifts was for amiable mockery, with himself and his pretensions included among its targets. Of the miscellaneous items contained in the Mikhail volumes, the most entertaining is one of the three pieces contributed by Behan himself (the other two are newspaper paragraphs of very little consequence). "The Woman on the Corner of the Next Block to Us" was written for *Vogue* (American edition) in 1956; here Behan, in merry mood, puts himself in the company of those Irish workers who write about their trade as an alternative to practising it, keeping *The Bell* well supplied with exercises in a picturesque mode.

Largeness of appetite was an asset at first, then a burden. John Ryan (in "The Home and Colonial Boy") tells us how Behan, on one occasion, suddenly crammed into his own mouth the steak supper he'd prepared for some cats belonging to friends: "God forgive me...". He gasped. Such helpless voracity has a comic effect, of course, generating indulgence for the person in his grip. Incoherence, showmanship - another of Behan's traits - helps to rivet the attention of the public too. There are enough witnesses to his spectacular liveliness, wit and charm - all qualities which flourished in the pubs of Dublin before succumbing to destructive forces. Inducious camaraderie, waywardness, anarchy and buffoonery were always temptations for a character so extravagantly constituted. Behan was drawn to extremes of behaviour, and, after the success of *The Quare Fellow*, had the means to gratify his intemperate desires.

Before fame overtook him, Behan looked to his friends for the daily provision of such necessities as writing paper, food, drink, encouragement, "smoking" of cigarettes, and so on; later friends supported him in different ways, discouraging him from excessive drinking and when that failed, extracting him from the pub-crawls and pub-brawls he was apt to get into. Those concerned for his well-being were often led on a dismal trek from bar to bar as the wonton playwright became skilled at evasion. All have duly recorded their efforts on his behalf, however unproductive these turned out to be. In the appalling last years of his life, between the full-blown interludes, Behan carried on like some larid figment of temperance propaganda, smashing everything around him, inviting assault charges, abusing his companions and often quite literally winding up in the gutter. His escapades by now have lost their savour and turned discreditable. Truly, Behan's wife Beatrice had a lot to put up with. By all accounts, she remained unimpeachably loyal and suffered stoically, when suffering was unavoidable; she is foremost among those who stood by Behan when his disorderly habits had run out of control.

Beatrice Behan's autobiography, *My Life With Brendan* (1974) - one of Professor Mikhail's sources of material - was conceived as an antidote to "the writings of persons who had degraded him during his lifetime" and who had subsequently attempted "to smear his reputation". Among these she probably included Ulick O'Connor,

who, in his biography (*Brendan Behan*, 1970) adverted to the topic of her husband's supposed homosexual leanings - an aspect of his character she seems inclined to repudiate. In fact, as far as this matter is concerned we have no reason either to disregard O'Connor's allegations, or to disagree with the view expressed by Anthony Cronin, that Behan's homosexuality was largely a pose. Cronin's account of his friendship with Brendan Behan, and their eventual estrangement (extracted from *Dead as Doornails*, his study of three prominent Dublin figures, Behan, Patrick Kavanagh and Flann O'Brien) is among the most valuable and illuminating memoirs we have: it neither inflates his subject nor claims a special acquaintanceship with the "real", unembellished Behan. The majority of Mikhail's contributors take up one or other of these positions.

*The Quare Fellow* was staged at the Pike Theatre, Dublin, in 1954, and then at Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, Stratford, in 1956 - the year of Behan's famous drunken appearance on television, with Malcolm Muggeridge in the interviewer's chair; "like all drunks", Muggeridge recalled some time later, "he was a fearful bore". (He bored Kenneth Allsop too, according to Max Caulfield, though Allsop's obituary notice, true to the requirements of the form, is kinder in tone.) *Borstal Boy* Brendan Behan's most substantial work, came out in 1958; and the first English-language production of *The Hostage* followed a year later. In its subject-matter, Behan's second play bears a very close resemblance to one of Frank O'Connor's stories ("Guests of the Nation"), as a number of reviewers pointed out at the time - perhaps prompting Behan's remark on the subject of drama critics who, he said, "are like eunuchs in a harem: they see the tricks done every night, they know how it's done, but they can't do it themselves". O'Connor himself mentions this piece of plagiarism, without recourse in the obituary he wrote for the *Sunday Independent*, adding that the playwright, on his home ground, made no bones about acknowledging the source of his inspiration: "Ah, sure, of course I stole the fucking thing."

After *The Wake* includes another version of this particular story, "The Execution", as well as a selection of Behan's *Irish Press* articles (published in that paper between 1954 and 1956) and other rediscovered pieces of prose. In spite of the intermittent vividness and friskiness of the writing, the effect of this collection is to remind us that the ways of discipline and industry were as alien to Brendan Behan as the practice of thrift. His striking delinquencies gained him an audience - and he was lucky enough, before the final deterioration set in, to succeed in making a way of life out of his habit of making an impression.

The late J. G. Farrell's novel *Troubles*, out of print in hardback edition for some years, will be reissued next week by Jonathan Cape (446pp. £8.95, 0 224 619004). The *TLS* of January 22 1971 commented on the novel's first publication: "Mr J. G. Farrell was born in 1935 - fifteen years after the time-setting of his book. Yet the sense of years is caught with remarkable fidelity. His scene is Ireland, a village called Kilmalough on the Wicklow coast not far from Dublin. The war is over. Sinn Féin is building up its campaign of terror, but Lloyd George has yet to strike his bargain with Arthur Griffith, the consequences of which are being rammed down our throats at this very moment. But *Troubles* is not at all an account of a shooting war... Incident and physical action abound, but they belong not to that of King's Regulations. The majestic broods over the novel like some decrepit ostrich over its egg. It is a vast, crumbling hotel, a huge sinking ship of a place, symbol of a lost Great British world and of an empire already beginning to fall apart..." Along with *Troubles* Cape are also reissuing hardback editions of two novels by Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of Heart* (294pp. £7.95, 0 224 02111 7) and *To the North* (240pp. £7.95, 0 224 02110 9).

## S/He

There's burnt ground and a cindertrack all along the ridge between the shops and the railway bridge, like it's occupied territory with no one around this cold map.

Here's a wet slough smells like a used sheath, and here's frogspawn and a car battery under a scraggy hawthorn. They're having a gag chucking weebits and yuk and laughing at the blups - kids turned fierce on a tip, little hard men in boiler suits locked in a wargame.

Yesterday I stared at this girl with cropped hair - a grandpa shift on her and lovebits on her neck, little pinky bruises like a rope had snagged there.

Ah shite, the bitter joy as the plunged head gets born - a March wind hits the main street of a village called Convoys and I'm starved by the first screech that's torn from out the guts of the blind post.

Something in the air, too-quiet-together on the back road that slips down into Derry.

Where that open pasture slopes from a close wood to a file of chestnuts there's a counterfactual sense that unsettles me just now. It might be the landlord's absence from a version of pastoral, or the hidden scamer that has to be somewhere.

Over the ramp the light that bangs back from the fieldgrey screens has a preserved feel to it, like radio silence or the site of an accident.

I wind down the window, pass proof of myself and match the copper stubble on his chin with the light green of his shirt - may God forgive me this parched gift of sight.

This hereness is to loiter by a quay in Derry and gaze at the spread river, the pigeons and the pigeon-cowling on a stained flour mill, until a voice whistles in the balmy sigh of a lover, 'who's in the wrong country like the maiden city?'

'Would you give us a lift, love? It's that late n'cary... I was only half there like a girl after a dance, wavy, on the road to Muff.

We might've been out after curfew in the buzzy *deus-chavans*, slipping past the chestnuts on a street in provincial France. It stuck close to me, though, how all through the last half a helicopter held itself above the Guildhall - Vershinina's lines were slowed by the blind chopping blades, though Olga looked chuffed when she sighed, 'Won't it be odd with no soldiers on the streets?'

Tom Paul

# Shaw and biography

Michael Holroyd

Early in his *Sixteen Self-Sketches*, Bernard Shaw offers his readers an apology. It's a Shavian apology. People, he writes, kept asking him why he didn't publish his own biography. "I can't," he wrote, "that I am not at all biographical. I have never lived anybody. Nothing very unusual has happened to me. To justify a biography, he went on, the subject must have had adventures. Extraordinary things ought to happen to him. Dragons he should slay. I have had no heroic adventures." Shaw admitted. Ninety-nine point five per cent of his life, he believed, was the same as ninety-nine point five per cent of anyone else's; the same familiar process of growing, feeding, excreting, dressing and undressing, lodging and going. To inflict such a stale programme on the reader would be unbearably tedious. Of course there was that point-five per cent that was not Shavian. But Shaw himself had planned these freckles of gold into his work: "my goods are all in the biographical window and on the stage," he declared: "what is communicable has been already communicated..."

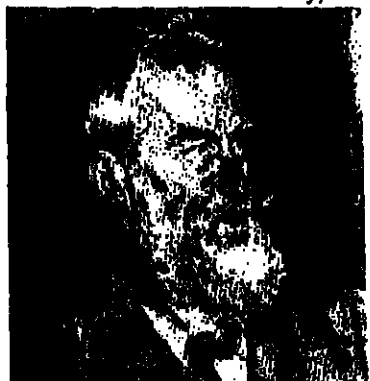
Taking Shaw's opinion literally, you are led to the conclusion that only men of action - admirals, boy-scout leaders, dictators, the like - merit a biography. As with the *Boy's Own Journal*, biography is adventure-story and it is nothing. It bulges with the readings of quacks as if they were leeches and salins. Shaw complained, in his Preface to *Back to Methuselah*, "of barren soundbells as explorers and discoverers". And of course Shaw was historically correct. In the Preface to *Androcles and the Lion*, for instance, he treats the gospels as examples of early biography. He notes how St Matthew tends "like most biographers", he says, to "identify the episodes and prejudices of his hero with his own". But Shaw also analyses St John's formula for treating biography as a record of the "fulfilment of ancient Jewish prophecies". In other words, biography was deeply prejudiced and had its place primarily as a pillbox for the divinely pre-ordained picture-pattern of history. Scramble the dots and you have altered history. And that, in a sense, was Shaw's game.

For centuries, with a few modifications reflecting changes in taste and fashion, biography had been employed to promote much the same purpose. Beginning as praise, it had developed during medieval European times into a laudatory chronicle, celebrating a successful life: the life of a saint or saint. This was part of the process of idealization that Shaw attacked so brilliantly in *The Quare Fellow*. The edition of biography could have found some different subjects to enshrine: the common man, perhaps. His modestest biographer - "I have never killed anybody" - is made in a spirit of sympathy as well as of paradox. For in Victorian times, having recovered from the shock of Boswell and Johnson, and Froude having been demolished for his *Carlyle*, biography had turned back into a lavish whitewashing exercise. In this assiduous effort of spring-cleaning, the stains of history were continually being brushed away. That is why Shaw hated it. The readers, suddenly to find a dead body on the carpet. After all, what else were biographers than a housekeeper in the act of tidying away all aspects of human nature? The house they kept so smartly spick and span was a museum dedicated to the past, not to the future. It was a Madame Tussaud's filled with the regularly waxwork figures of monarchs and statesmen, their medals and crowns for ever wonderfully polished and glittering. Shaw wanted to complement this palace of standard celebrities with a chamber of horrors - not in the interests of improving the art of biography, but in order to make biography a useful tool in changing the future. Like St John he has a formula: "I will use his life as a hero - in his case Jesus, Wagner, Julius Caesar - to illustrate his opinions."

As a sign of letters who craved to influence the political climate of Britain, Ireland and the world, Shaw believed in the power of words to enforce action: that, perhaps, was his romanticism. He proposed that biographers should exchange one package of myths for another - an up-to-date package that would set human beings in a new context. No longer should biography be controlled by prophecies from the past; it must be connected to our future aspirations. It is part of a humane process of helping us to realize our hopes. If the word is preferable to the deed it is because, as Shaw wrote, "only on paper has humanity yet achieved glory, beauty, truth, knowledge, virtue, and abiding love". But then, as Oscar Wilde had suggested, life imitates art, reality pursues the dream. That, in Shaw's mind, was the justification for a life spent writing down words on paper.

Shaw had pleaded guilty to having "never killed anybody", but many Victorian heroes of biographies had of course, directly or indirectly, killed a good number of people. The body Shaw demands to be placed on the carpet, though a shockingly untidy sight for a fastidious person such as himself, sheds no blood. However, untraditionally introduced, it is still a waspwork. For Shaw was that strange creature, the passive revolutionary. His thought is bold; his feelings are timid. Intellectually he travelled everywhere; emotionally he stayed at home. His audacious paper paradoxes are built from this inconsistency of thought and feeling. You may spot his emotional immaturity in much of his work. *Arms and the Man*, for example, is precociously clever; but it is a war of chocolate soldiers as seen from the nursery. His vocabulary is another symptom. He writes of biography as being devoted to "soundbells" - and with that word we are immediately back again in *Boy's Own Journal*. It is a world he never wholly left and it accounts for his view of biography as being best suited to adventurers. While he responds emotionally to these boastful tales of warriors and quacks, intellectually he condemns such exercises. Often, he tells us, biography displays the very worst aspect of immaturity: a gratuitous and uncomprehending cruelty. "Can anything be more disgusting," he writes in his Preface to *Misalliance*, "than the spectacle of a nation reading the biography of Gladstone and gloating over the account of how he was flogged, compelled to hold him down whilst he was flogged?" Shaw's argument is that the vicious pleasure of such sadistic descriptions helped to endorse an indecent routine which we honoured with the name of education. This education had produced "an England of ignoramus" he wrote. "[content] to be driven day after day into compounds and set to the tasks they loathe by the men they hate and fear, as if this were the inevitable destiny of mankind. And naturally, when they grow up, they helplessly exchange the prison of the school for the prison of the mine or the workshop or the office, and drudge along stupidly and miserably, with just enough gregarious instinct to turn furiously on any intelligent person who proposes a change." Old-fashioned immature biography taught its readers a different lesson. Gladstone was flogged; Gladstone became Prime Minister. Perhaps if your son was flogged sufficiently, held down by his schoolfellows as Gladstone had been, he too might become Prime Minister, or Foreign Secretary, or at least Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. By these naive and primitive methods, biography idealized a corrupt system by enshrining such barbarities with myths biography helped to perpetuate the corruption. You may see from this the potential power Shaw believed lay in biography. He was with Carlyle in thinking that our very history was "the essence of innumerable biographies". In the past, biography had largely existed as an instrument for maintaining the status quo. In the future, it could be a vehicle for progress. Shaw seemed to have high hopes of progress. "It would be quite easy to make England a paradise, according to our present ideas, in a few years," he wrote shortly before the First World War. "The difficulty is not the

but the will. And we have no will because the first thing done with us in childhood was to break our will." Shaw's will had not been broken; but his emotions had been lamed. He felt he was unlovable: he felt that, since this was the unalterable factor in his life, the only thing he could do was to make a virtue of his unlovableness, put it to some use for people. He would sit endlessly on committees, make of himself an ascetic and a hygienic example in matters of diet and clothing, puncture the amiable pretence of romance with his plays, turn the world uncomfortably upside down for the good of its inhabitants. In short, he would encourage people to become self-sufficient rather than depend for their vital happiness on the off-chance of love. He would make a world fit for the unlovable. He would give them (via the State) money; he would give them self-respect; he would give them everything but love. And it was true that he was unlovable; but then, looking around, so were most people. Only by means of paradox, for a moment or two, here and there, in their jokes perhaps, might they appear to earn love. But it was reality, not



George Bernard Shaw by Augustus John.

appearances. Shaw believed himself to be concerned with - though one might have to exploit appearances in order to change the realities of the world. "I implore you not to describe me as a lovable human being," he begged one of his biographers, Lawrence Langner, who went on to publish a book called *G.B.S. and the Lunatic*. To justify acting like this on his instinct of self-dislike, he gave a characteristically commonsense reason. To do otherwise - would bring him a million begging letters by the next post. So he instructed Langner to present him as detestable, avaricious, merciless, contemptuous and everything odious enough to discourage people from writing to him. "Otherwise you may have been begging me for years," he wrote. As a child he had been neglected; as an adult he possessed an uncontrollable craving for attention; and long before the end this craving disgusted him. It was not a vanity. It was not people's good opinion he wanted: simply their attention. "Woe unto me when all men praise me!" he makes St Joan say. Against the universal praise of others Shaw had an impregnable defence: he exorbitantly praised himself. There was no room for others. "Why should I get another man to praise me?" he asks in the Preface to *Three Plays for Puritans*; "when I call praise myself." But his praise did not mirror any high self-esteem; it was, like so much else in Shaw, a compensation for something else. His very optimism was founded on paradox.

The Shavian paradox reflects the rift between his intellectual and emotional self, and his attitude to biography underlines this inconsistency. He had been adamant, for example, about how uninteresting he was biographically - and then stuck his statement by way of Shavian advertisement at the beginning of a volume of autobiographical sketches. Of course it is true that he never wrote, as it were, an official autobiography. He was quite intelligible, he said. Yet his miscellaneous writings about himself were so appallingly curious that when, after his death, a selection of them was prepared for publication by Stanley Weintraub, it ran to two sturdy volumes: 600 pages in all. For in fact it was not true that ninety-nine-point-five per cent of Shaw's existence was the same as ninety-nine-point-five per

cent of everyone else's. Its very foundations were different. His childhood was unusual; his marriage was unusual; what he wore, what he ate, even what he failed to drink - all were unusual. He was an isolated man, out of touch with Ireland, with England, and the world he wished to influence. In a curiously moving passage in the Preface to his novel *Immaturity*, he writes:

If I am to be entirely communicative on this subject I must add that the mere rawness which soon rubs off was complicated by a deeper strangeness which has made me all my life a sojourner on this planet rather than a native of it. Whether it be that I was born mad or a little too sane, my kingdom was not of this world: I was at home only in the realm of my imagination, and at my ease only with the mighty dead.

And yet he told his biographer Archibald Henderson that "unless you can show me in the context of my time as a member of a very interesting crowd you will fail to produce the only thing that makes biography tolerable." What he wanted from his biographers was a vehicle for his thought that would place it in the current of contemporary life and make him a representative being, "a member of a very interesting crowd", no longer a strange sojourner on this planet but a native at ease with the living rather than the dead. He wanted his life recreated on the page with the facts brought up to date.

Shaw distrusted biographers; and his distrust is not difficult to explain. He believed that the source of all our ideas lay in our instinct; that we used our minds to explain the promptings of this instinct and to convince other people of the validity of our ideas. Ideas that were not put into practice lay for ever in the womb. It was a test of our will to get these ideas received into the laws of the country. In the dialectics of debating, virtually no one, not even G. K. Chesterton, certainly not H. G. Wells, could get the better of Shaw. He was brilliant. And he worked enormously hard. No one who has looked at his work for the Fabian Society, or as a St Pancras Vestryman, can doubt the strength and stamina of his will. Yet although he stimulated several generations of young people to question the ideas of their parents and to begin thinking for themselves, almost none of his political ideas, from the new alphabet to equality of income (pay, that is, without differentials) and the Coupled Vote (voting, that is, for a man-and-woman) came near to being implemented. Shaw wanted to be tested in practice, not to be a martyr to the cause of his ideas. He wanted to be tested biographically back to their source. There was only one evil in the world, he argued, against which we were powerless: the tampering with our instincts when we were children. If the compass of these instincts was no longer true then we were, to use the title of one of his plays, *On the Rocks*. The fundamental question of Shaw's life was whether the course he was attempting to steer us on was true or false.

To show that his ideas had grown naturally from the social and political soil of mid-nineteenth century Britain, Shaw gives us a picture of his parents that is typical, however of the middle class made under the economic conditions of those times. His mother and father married for love - for love of money. This sounds eccentric, but then how few people, Shaw reasons, living in the strict religious and class stratification of Victorian Ireland were free to do anything else. So his parents married conventionally and then after twenty-one years - a very reasonable time - they parted amicably because they could not afford, after launching a family of three, to continue living together. They had like so many others, miscalculated happiness. They were never divorced. People didn't go in for divorces in those days. Besides, there was no need: no particular quarrel, no lovers' pining. Such things were mainly confined to the pages of romantic novels. Shaw's father drank a bit - so do many fathers. But on the whole his parents got on well enough. You could say of them: as you could say of him - that ninety-nine-point-five per cent of his lives were like ninety-nine-point-five per cent of everyone else's lives at that time. It was the time

that were wrong, and it was the times that Shaw set out to change. He described his childhood as "rich only in dreams, frightful & loveless realities". At the age of twenty he turned his back on dreams, on the gathering Celtic twilight of Ireland, and set out in England, through the body of his literary and political work, to make the realities less frightful. That, in rough-and-ready terms, is Shaw's account of how his work developed from the experiences of his early years.

Yet it is possible for a biographer to tell a different story that shows G.B.S. substituting financial need for emotional impulse and charts his thought in a fantastical development of his early dreams. In this story, Shaw secretly believes himself to have inherited from his parents qualities that were so incompatible as to drive them, even after twenty-one years of marriage, to inhabit different countries. His gift for drama came from making external these inherited differences; and his mission, like a religious quest, was to find a synthesis between these conflicting forces. The Superman became his symbol of this synthesis; and the great debates of his plays - between the Devil and Don Juan in *Man and Superman*; between Undershaft and Barbara in *Major Barbara*; between Father Keegan and Larry Doyle in *John Bull's Other Island* - were attempts to reconcile such incompatibilities. He searched for a way of uniting word and deed, spirit and body, heart and mind, the actual with the ideal, reality with the dream. In *John Bull's Other Island* he makes Larry Doyle, the Irishman who had come to England, say: "Live in contact with dreams and you will get something of their charm: live in contact with facts and you will get something of their brutality. I wish I could find a country to live in where the facts were not brutal and the dreams not unreal. There is such a place of course, and its name is Utopia. And Utopia would be England when England became a paradise. It was, Shaw had predicted, "quite easy to make England a paradise". But he had said that before the First World War. After that war, during which he wrote *Heartbreak House*, he no longer believed this. Our collective instinct had been trivialized, he felt, and was leading us astray. Increasingly his ideas depended on a sacrifice of the actual present for the hypothetical future. If there were brutalities - brutalities, let us say, in Soviet Russia - who were we to point to them in virtuous indignation, we who had so recently gloated over Gladstone's flogging at Eton? When had history been anything but brutal? When had human beings ever treated themselves with consideration? Truly we were an unlovable species. It might be better if, like the pterodactyl and tyrannosaurus, we were quietly phased out of the evolutionary process. After the Zeppelin raid, at the end of *Heartbreak House*, the survivors are almost disappointed to be still alive. "What a glorious experience!" gasps Mrs Hushabye. "I hope they'll come again tomorrow night." And Nellie Dunn breathes, radiant at the prospect: "Oh, I hope so." And that's the end of the play.

Human beings were unwilling, perhaps incapable of learning much - though, of course, Shaw added, we must keep on trying. "I am by nature and destiny a preacher," says Aubrey at the end of *Too True to be Good*. "But I have no Bible, no creed: the war has shot both out of my hands... meanwhile my gift has possession of me: I must preach and preach and preach no matter how late the hour and how short the day, no matter whether I have nothing to say." Though he retained a patina of optimism, Shaw's creed had gone in *Back to Methuselah*, where he finally divorces spirit from body, like Ariel released from Prospero, the genius from the gentleman. The Superman had now become a Prometheus, bound to a rock of inactivity by the fetters of bureaucracy: a frustrated believer in action whose Demagoguery is to be some modern dictator - Stalin, or Mussolini, or even Hitler. It is the predicament that Shaw himself was to face in *Man and Superman*: the pursuit of the

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Superhuman: it leads to an indiscriminate contempt for the human." In the guise of Don Juan, Shaw's sin was to have treated men and women as if they were outside the moral world, like pet cats and dogs. His kindness, which was persistent, derived from no love of his neighbour but from the striving, by way of example, for moral superiority conferred by impeccable good manners. So ends the story.

It is the sort of story Shaw feared, suggesting as it does that the divorce of body and spirit in *Back to Methuselah* was almost pre-ordained by the splitting up of his parents; that his early years were so irregular as to have produced in him a wayward philosophy. One can detect this fear in his treatment of the two biographers whose books he stopped from publication. The first was by a fantastical character called Demetrius O'Boiger, the son of an Irish Police Inspector, who began his study in 1912 as a thesis for the Graduate Department of the University of Pennsylvania where, apparently, he had been a student for fifteen years. He was an admirer of Shaw and had previously approached him for advice on how to become a playwright. He had convinced Shaw, by his proposal to add an extra Act to *Fanny's First Play*, that he was fundamentally a madman. Apparently encouraged by this, Shaw

agreed to answer his questions and O'Boiger, vastly pleased, decided to scrutinize Shaw's youth in Dublin. "In a general way I adopted the policy of following up loose threads in the studies of Mr Shaw that had been made by others," he explained. "I determined to run out the thread of his home surroundings. . . . I thought I saw not a few resemblances. . . . and I determined to penetrate them and systematize the results if Mr Shaw were willing to give me the necessary information."

And Shaw, like Barak, was willing. What was there to fear from a madman? O'Boiger would send him a sheet of paper with a question typed at the top, and Shaw would fill the rest of the page with an answer sometimes running to five or six hundred words. His help grew almost into an obstacle preventing O'Boiger from completing anything. In fact, the poor man often completed his book - though never to anyone's satisfaction. He completed it, for example, in February 1916, only to receive, a little later that month, a twenty-nine page typewritten letter from Shaw describing the circumstances of his youth and the household in which he grew up. The death of his mother, Shaw explained, had to some extent untied his hands. Certainly he had never been so forthcoming. But he did not send these pages for publication as they stood, he

added. He was simply giving O'Boiger access to a few hasty autobiographical sketches that he might possibly elaborate and publish himself later on. After another two years or so O'Boiger again completed his work. A few months after the armistice of 1918 he received an offer from Harper Brothers to publish a revised text. He sent the news to Shaw and sat down to make a fourth draft, working "till the nerves of neck and the back of my head could no longer stand the strain." Shaw was not. He had not written all that matter to enable Harper Brothers to make a huge profit at O'Boiger's expense and his own. He demanded to see the contract and, having been sent it, confirmed that if the book contained a line of which the copyright belonged to him he would treat it as an infringement. As a result, Harpers cancelled the contract. This was exactly what Shaw wanted them to do. But it was not what O'Boiger wanted. Shaw, he noted, "had delivered a sound blow for principle's sake. He had saved me from being published." In a frantic letter, O'Boiger alternately abused Shaw and begged him to change his mind. Shaw responded by cautioning him not to be scared. After all, he was merely suffering from a sort of delirium tremens brought on by overwork. This advice sounded to O'Boiger like that of a doctor who prescribes for a bankrupt invalid six luxurious weeks on the French Riviera. He retorted angrily that not all American publishers were eager to bring out books about G.B.S., apparently unaware how pleased Shaw would be to hear this. Another American publisher, however, did express interest in the manuscript and asked for a Shavian Preface - but Shaw refused to authorize the book in this way. It was no longer ostensibly a question of contracts, but of the text. He had been provoked by O'Boiger into revealing more about his early years than ever before. Perhaps he had felt a need to write some of it down following his mother's death. But he did not want to see it all in print, especially when so many details were interfered with by O'Boiger. So he held on to the manuscript. It was still in his possession in 1922. Somehow he could not make up his mind to send "the blasted MS of yours" back without another look at it. Looking at it again, Shaw decided that O'Boiger had pressed into the service of literature all his father's police techniques. This explained his treatment of Shaw's parents as suspicious characters in custody, his rejection of all Shaw's statements as unsupported by evidence and coming from a tainted source, and so on.

According to Shaw his biographer was suffering from something very common in Ireland, a Resentment Complex. He had the resentment of the poor man against the rich man, of the Irish Catholic against the Irish Protestant, and several other resentments from which he had achieved a portrait of a most horrible woman whom he alleged was Shaw's mother, with a sordid husband, and a disingenuous son, forming the sort of Irish interior which he most hated and despised as typifying every social injustice from which he and his people ever suffered.

What emerges from this response is Shaw's genuine distress. O'Boiger's impressions had been composed from Shaw's letters: he had turned the paradoxes inside out to produce an ugly picture of the formative Dublin years - those years that Shaw himself had admitted were "frightful in reality". So they reached deadlock. Shaw allowed that O'Boiger was entitled to his opinions, but not to Shaw's endorsement of them to the extent of gaining immunity from the copyright and libel laws. Under those conditions no publisher would agree to print the book and so, at last, O'Boiger submitted to the process of Shavian editing and amendment that all other biographers were obliged to accept. Unfortunately this involved practically rewriting his book for him. Shaw later explained, and for that it was impossible for him to find time. So the manuscript, now in its fifth draft, and called *The Real Shaw*, remained suspended: a great vexation to both of them. "You will certainly be the death of me," Shaw cried out with what was to be the most lethal of his paradoxes. In the summer of 1923, O'Boiger suddenly died. Shaw did not know whether to be glad or sorry. The

situation had been a painful one for him and a great worry for O'Boiger, whom it had helped to worry into his grave. A tragic business, Shaw concluded; but his biographer had been unhelpful.

O'Boiger had made no startling discoveries about these years in Ireland, but his enquiries had pressed on a bruise, startled Shaw, made him deftly rearrange the facts as if to wrap up some wound. And having rearranged the facts he stuck to them. The source of his difficulties lay in the unorthodox ménage à trois in which he was brought up. His mother shared the house with two Georges: the alcoholic redundant Civil Servant George Carr Shaw; and the musical phenomenon George John Vandeleur Lee. After which George was G.B.S. named? The question seems to have arisen in Shaw's mind, uncomfortable enough for him to have laid special emphasis on his resemblance to his father, to have eliminated George as his own name ("Don't George me") and to have crowded his plays with characters whose parentage is dubious. But if, as seems almost certain, Shaw was the son of George Carr Shaw, then G.B.S., the public figure, was modelled on the phenomenal Vandeleur Lee. His mother's happiness, not just her economic survival, had centred on Lee. Shaw feared too much biographical detective work into these years because it might revive old suspicions and reveal new facts.

He did no research himself, he confessed to St John Ervine, who wanted in the mid 1930s to write a life of Shaw, for he had found that, if he invented all his facts on the basis of his knowledge of human nature, he always came out right, whereas, if he referred to documents and authorities, they wearied him and set him wrong. Writers should trust their genius rather than their industry, he thought. It was the less fallible of the two. St John Ervine's reputation for industrious research seems to have set Shaw against his book. Ervine stopped work on it in 1942 when Shaw dismissed what he had written about his Irish years as "hopeless". He seemed interested not in individuals but only in their classes. Shaw told him. Yet, elsewhere he had insisted on being placed in what he called "the context of my time", had suggested that his parents' marriage was characteristic of their class and emphasized the ordinariness of his upbringing. Expounding on the matter of class, he informed Ervine that Vandeleur Lee "had no creed. I never heard him mention religion". If this is literally true, it is nevertheless socially and factually misleading. For the documents and authorities Shaw advised Ervine to ignore, reveal Lee to have been a Roman Catholic. This was no matter of religious principle, but a fact of social life in Dublin. The ménage à trois was therefore composed of two Protestants and a Catholic - as noticeable in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century as a household of mixed-colour in England in the early twentieth century. This was the sort of fact from which Shaw wanted St John Ervine's attention diverted - since Ervine, being Irish himself, would understand the implications very well.

This is a good example of what Shaw wanted to forget and a good illustration of how he wanted his biographers to create a better past for him. But now that he can no longer suffer from the consequences, it is possible to put some of the facts back in their original places. The first person to have begun this job was a strange character called B. C. Rosset. He was an American somewhat in the tradition of Demetrius O'Boiger. He was a writer; his book, published briefly in 1964 by O'Boiger's university in Pennsylvania and called *Shaw of Dublin: The Formative Years*, is a compendium of research on precisely the lines envisaged by O'Boiger. But since there was no Shaw to assist him in his research, Rosset did something that neither O'Boiger nor even St John Ervine had done. He went to Dublin. He did more. He rented a room in the Sygne Street house where Shaw was born; he married the cook in Trinity College, Dublin, and he settled down to work in every coveywebbed archive of the city. And he made the discoveries that O'Boiger was hoping to make over forty years earlier. For example, Shaw had written that Vandeleur Lee "had to make his position in London before he could provide the musical setting for my mother and sister". It was Rosset who found from the list of departures

for Holyhead printed in the *Irish Times* that Mrs Shaw followed Lee to London on her twenty-first wedding anniversary - that is only a few days after Lee's own departure, not the months or even year or two that Shaw implied. But the hand of Shaw appeared to stretch back and shut the book of Rosset's almost as decisively as it had O'Boiger's. Rosset had quoted from Shaw without the permission of the Shaw Estate, and the Shaw Estate swiftly withdrew the book from publication. Not long after that Rosset died. The history of Demetrius O'Boiger seemed to have been posthumously repeated.

Besides marrying his cook, Rosset had made one other inspired choice while living in Dublin. He had selected a man called John O'Donovan as his research assistant. Many of his findings were in fact the discoveries of John O'Donovan who, unlike Rosset, was a natural writer. He wrote a plain and a tiny luminous masterpiece of biographical detective work, a study of Vandeleur Lee and his influence on G.B.S. entitled *Shaw and the Charlatan Genius*.

How would Shaw himself have responded to such a book? His attitude to biography had altered in the course of his life. As a young anonymous reviewer for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the 1880s, he had called for the sort of revolution in biographical writing that Lytton Strachey was to conduct. Later, in 1905, he wrote, to Henry Irving's son: "If you write a life of your father, don't make it a vestryman's epitaph. Let us have the truth about the artist, the studiously selfless, self-sacrificing truth. The artist sacrifices everything to his art, beginning with himself. But the art is himself." In his statement Shaw's attitude is on its turn. For what he is really beginning to say is that biography should support the work, if necessary at the expense of the life; that it should (as with the gospel of St John) fulfil the career of the artist which takes over from the life of the man. Later still, he refers to "the dramatic faculty that enables me to use the stage effect I am producing, to exploit it historically for the sake of purpose that drives me on without any real complicity in its artificiality." And yet, since you may not separate style from content in art, there is in his sentence here a warning to his biographer: "Reality has no place in individual portraits because Reality is not an individual thing; it drives me on, it drives every class, but then he crossed out 'Reality' and substituted 'the inner life'. Shaw knew that reality and the inner life were the same thing; but he over-rode them with stage effect and the external life. He knew the sort of distortion this was likely to produce. In his fifties he had written that "no man has an accurate knowledge of his own life, and that when an autobiography does not agree with a biography, the biography is probably right." Such a statement, from someone who invariably imposed autobiography on his biographers, is devastating. It is self-sacrificing truth of truth in the art out to be the sacrifice of truth to the art of Dr Pangloss. The man who, in the nineteenth century, had called for a new type of truth-telling in biography had grown into a twentieth-century subject for biographers' worst reminders his readers that "when you read a biography remember that the truth is never fit for publication."

In so far as this was valid in Shaw's lifetime, it cannot have the same validity now that he is dead and unable personally to suffer from what is written about him. One thing, however, has not changed in the seventy-five years since Arnold Henderson began the first authorized biography of Shaw. On a visit to England, Henderson was introduced to Bram Stoker as Bernard Shaw's biographer. "I can only say," Stoker said, "that you have my profound sympathy!" That need for sympathy that Shaw's biographer is, I can assure you, was there.

This article is adapted from two lectures given recently by Michael Holroyd, Shaw's biographer, in the Gifford Memorial Lecture delivered at the Royal Society of Literature and the Portland State University, Oregon.

#### Biography and Memoirs

JOHN ARLOTT. *Jack Hobbs: Profile of the Master*. 144p. Penguin. £1.75. 0 14006174 6 □ Jack Hobbs was out first ball in his first Test innings. He also made a duck in his last innings for his county, Surrey. No beginning or end could be more unrepresentative. Hobbs was not only the greatest English batsman, he scored more first-class runs and centuries than any other batsman. John Arlott gives us an affectionate, moving portrait of this modest "model" player, who, though content with his lot in the curious class division of cricket of his day, became the first professional to lead an England side and to be knighted for his services to the game.

A.J.H.

WILEY FARSON. *The Way of a Transgressor*. 447pp. Zenith. £2.95. 0 00731 5. □ Negley Farson, a famous American foreign correspondent of the interwar years, published his best-selling account of his adventures early in life in 1935. It tells of his childhood and youth in the east, his war-time business life in Manchester and wartime Petrograd, where he encountered the March 1917 Revolution at uncomfortably close quarters, and his experience in Egypt as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps. At times semi-incapacitated by a chronic leg infection he was yet able to undertake a long small-boat trip across Europe from Holland to the Black Sea, reporting his first-hand experiences for the *Chicago Daily News*. After half-a-century the book remains extremely readable as a breezy if at times rather breathless account of a string of adventurous episodes in exotic settings.

J.K.L.W.

HELEN THURBER and EDWARD WEBBS (Eds.). *Selected Letters of James Thurber*. 276pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 1400333 6 □ First published in Great Britain by Hamish Hamilton in 1982. Reviewed in the *TLS* (January 29, 1982) by Alan Coren who wrote of the letters: "They are dull dogs, almost all, so much concerned with the sort of day-to-day trivia of interest only to the recipient. . . . The writing itself, casual to the point of sloppiness, is utterly uncharacteristic of so self-punishingly meticulous a prose-maker, and the laughs are very few indeed."

PATRICK WHITE. *Flaws in the Glass: A Self-Portrait*. 260pp. Penguin £2.50. 0 14006293 9 □ First published by Jonathan Cape in 1981 and reviewed in the *TLS* of November 20, 1981.

MAURICE O'SULLIVAN. *Twenty Years A-Growing*. 288pp. Oxford University Press. £2.50. 0 19 281325 0 □ *Twenty Years A-Growing* was greeted in 1933 by E. M. Forster with enthusiasm: "Here is the egg of a sea-bird - lovely, perfect, and laid this very morning!" It is also the autobiography of Maurice O'Sullivan, who describes growing up on the Blackhead Islands off the South-West coast of Ireland in the early years of the century. The author gives an account of his childhood as part of this remote community of about 200 people living a life of almost medieval bleakness, and a glimpse of his later move to Dublin where he joined the Civic Guard and encountered, for the first time, commonplace of modern life such as buses and the cinema. It is not a description of peasant life by an outsider (as is Synge's account of the Aran Islands) but is an unconscious personal story by someone who was part of what he describes but who was sufficiently aware of the contrast between Blackhead and the outside world (the author, unlike many of the Islanders, could read and speak English and one of the few books he had read was Gorky's *My Childhood*). The book is translated from the Irish by Moya Llewellyn Davies and George Thomson and is written in a kind of accentless Irish prose ("each of them put a half-crown in my pocket, with a good deal more I got from the others, and now I had my two hands down in my pockets, making music out of the coins with my fingers") which is strong on dialogue and imagery, but strangely short on detailed description and fact.

L.D.

PHILIP ZIEGLER. *Diana Cooper*. 384pp. Penguin. £2.50. 0 14 00637 5 □ First published by Hamish Hamilton in 1981 and reviewed in the *TLS* of September 25, 1981.

#### Gardening

FELICITY BRYAN. *The Town Gardener's Companion*. 182pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 046559 6 □ First published by Andre Deutsch in 1981.

ANTHONY HUXLEY. *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Gardening*. 373pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 046297 X □ First published by Allen Lane in 1981.

WILLIAM ROBINSON. *The Wild Garden*. 304pp. Century. £4.95. 0 7126 0171 1 □ William Robinson was an enemy of wanton repression in the garden, and in this book, originally published in 1870, he advocates principles openly opposed to Victorian formality. He is horrified by wintry bareness, and by the wasteful practice of summer bedding out, in gaudy military rows, of valiant but tender flowers, to be ripped out as soon as their bloom is over. Naturalization is the guiding principle of the Wild Garden, and there are economies of stock and labour, for the true wild garden plant is hardy and needs no care after planting. Robinson's influence can be seen wherever there are multitudes of daffodils and crocuses pushing their way up through lawns and meadows. But, as he is at pains to make clear, the wild garden is neither the picturesque wilderness favoured by "landscape" gardeners, nor a meaningless imitation of Nature. Exotic and native plants are to be artfully combined in natural looking groups to cast their charms along hedges and old walls, in ditches and groves, by brooks and in bogs, meadows and dells. Bulbs are essential, as are climbers - roses and clematis and *vitis* together scrambling up trees and over fences; and wildflowers, too, in clumps for green effect, such as goldenrod, poppies, hellebores or cornflowers. It must be admitted that Robinson's *The Wild Garden* inspires a craving for an estate with country house and parkland, but its principles can be applied even to the smaller city garden without too much heartbreak.

A.P.

ANNE SCOTT-JAMES. *Sissinghurst: The Making of a Garden*. 160pp. Michael Joseph. £6.95. 0 7181 2255 9 □ After *Knole and the Sackvilles*, Harold Nicholson's *Diaries, Portrait of a Marriage* etc., Anne Scott-James's book (first published in 1975 and reviewed in the *TLS* of April 25 that year), which quotes liberally from such sources, might be suspected of carrying documentation about this couple to an absurd degree. It is in fact a fascinating account of a Nicholson and Vita Sackville-West created its famous garden out of an overgrown and neglected wilderness. It also shows that gardens can be more interesting than people, that Vita was capable of extremely hard work, that the garden is an exceptional and original creation (the photographs give some idea of its beauty) and that an exciting narrative can be made out of the subject. It is spiced with anecdotes and individual glimpses of its owners: Vita, hasty to have something pretty growing to show Harold on his return from Persia; Harold with the briefcase in hand making a tour of the garden after his week in London; luncheon outdoors in 1940 so that Vita could watch the bombers.

L.D.

#### History

LAWRENCE FREDMAN. *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. 473pp. Macmillan. £8.95. 0 333 34584 9 □ First published in 1981 and reviewed in the *TLS* of April 16, 1982.

LAURO MARTINEZ. *Power and Imagination: City States in Renaissance Italy*. 513pp. Penguin. £6.95. 0 14 055 158 1. □ First published in Great Britain by Allen Lane in 1980 and reviewed in the *TLS* of July 25 that year. The subtitle is misleading: Martinez's revisionism consists largely in his determination to trace the roots of the Renaissance back to the tenth and eleventh centuries, when the cities of Northern Italy began to

assert their identity and autonomy as against the feudal monolith of the Italian Kingdom. His perspective (like that of the Renaissance Humanists) is thoroughly Thucydidean. The history of the era is the history not just of city-states, but specifically of their urban centres. All conform more or less to the same pattern of development: through commune, *poderio*, *popolo*, signory and oligarchy to the princely courts of the High Renaissance. What is more important, is that it is only against the background of this struggle for power that one can understand the works of the imagination: Dante is so much a child of the Florence of the popular commune as Castiglione is of Sforza's Milan.

K.M.

R. H. TAWNEY. *The Acquisitive Society*. 191pp. Harvester Press. £5.95. 0 7108 0045 2. □ First published in 1921 by G. Bell and now re-issued with a preface by Peter Townsend. This classic was reviewed unfavourably in the *TLS* of June 2, 1921. The review ended: "In a time like the present, however, it seems equally out of place to call Heaven to witness to the bitter and vindictive sloth of the working classes" and to retell that the reason why the workers will not work is that the rich do not deserve that they should. Human nature is a poor thing at best; no doubt the rich are greedy and no doubt the poor are envious, but is either side likely to do much for society by expatiating on the faults of the other?"

#### Humour

MEL CALMAN. *Calman Revisited*. unnumbered pp. Methuen. £2.95. 0 413 57720 4 □ A collection of cartoons from Calman's previous books, to be published on May 12. The picture here is taken from it.



#### Literary Criticism

JOHN CAREY. *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art*. 303pp. Faber. £3.95. 0 571 13009 7. □ John Carey's book on Donne (reviewed by Christopher Hill in the *TLS* of 12 June 1981) is an exemplary study in which the poet's life and work are mixed. Donne comes across as a writer well suited to this kind of treatment: the creative part of his life being at once more fully accessible and more obviously fascinating to the interpreter than those of such contemporaries as Spenser or Shakespeare. Traditional critical priorities are strongly endorsed here, for Carey endeavours to seek out, but there is nothing old-fashioned about it. There is, rather, a lively eponymy in choosing Donne for such a study. If we recall the extent to which it was on the endlessly discussable "effects" of poets like Donne that the established tradition of century critical practice of separating the "life" from the "work" set its teeth. There is originality and commitment, too, in the areas of interest through which Donne is investigated - his Catholicism and apostasy, his ambition, his interest in

bodies, death, change and reason. In these categories we are given a picture not just of one man but of the interrelationship of his imagination with the concerns of his time.

R.B.

NEIL MCEWAN. *The Survival of the Novel: British Fiction in the Later Twentieth Century*. 188pp. Macmillan. £6.95. 0 333 34885 0 □ Neil MCEWAN's intentions, in *The Survival of the Novel* (first published in 1981), are to show "how unVictorian even the most Victorian-seeming modern English novelists are" and to "examine the originality of writers in relation to the Victorian novel". In the first part of the book he demonstrates how certain writers might use a conventional idiom (Angus Wilson, Kingsley Amis) or self-consciously refer to its style or content (Fowles). In this way the English novel may remain local but not parochial. MCEWAN analyses in detail the style of particular authors - Fowles, Murdoch, Powell, Kingsley Amis and Angus Wilson - and argues that their wide range of linguistic and formal skills serves to free them from the traditions they might seem to be bound to. Their fertility thus permits them to create a new, modern and imaginative kind of fiction. The book concludes with a specific analysis of two modern classics - *The Go-Between* and *Lord of the Flies*. MCEWAN argues with conviction that the English writer has an inbuilt superiority over his more ostentatiously experimental French or American counterpart for he has at his disposal the means to juxtapose the Victorian, social world which created the modern novel, against a "dismantled" modern vision.

V.R.

#### Social History

DAVID VINCENT. *Bread, Knowledge, Freedom. A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiography*. 221pp. Methuen. £4.95. 0 416 34670 7 □ Originally published by Europa in 1981 and reviewed in the *TLS* (by J.F.C. Harrison) of February 5, 1982 who wrote: "Using 142 primary working-class autobiographies covering the period c. 1790-1850, and supported by another eighty titles of associated works by contemporaries, he has wisely extended the range of the material available in this field of social history."

#### Social Studies

HUGH BRODY. *Maps and Dreams: A Journey into the Lives and Lands of the Beaver Indians of Northwest Canada*. 279pp. Penguin. £2.50. 0 14 022426 2 □ First published in Great Britain by Jill Norman and Hobhouse in 1982 and reviewed in the *TLS* of March 19, 1982.

ALDOUS HUXLEY. *Moksha*. 329pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 00 4919 X. □ First published in America in 1977. "There were dope addicts long before there were farmers," and the psychotropic proclivities of mankind are one of the main topics in this collection of Huxley's predictably limpid, stylish writings on drugs and visionary experience, with a preface by Albert Hofmann, the inventor of LSD, and edited by Michael Horowitz and Cynthia Palmer. Among the more speculative religious, scientific and pharmacological essays are excerpts from Huxley's novels and letters, and reports of his own experiments with LSD and mescaline. His enthusiasm for chemical transcendence sometimes risks veering unspectacularly off-key, but on the whole a reassuring pitch of reasoned, if idealistic exhortation is evenly, intelligently, and informatively maintained.

G.S.

#### Theology

ANDERS NYGREN. *Agape and Eros*. Translated by Philip S. Watson. 764pp. SPCK. £12.50. 0 281 04006 0. □ This theological classic (the complete edition first published here in 1953) is an exercise in modesty. However, a splendid anecdote of the mad King Ludwig II of Bavaria soaking a cast and stage in his Munich opera house from the overhead sprinklers is a demagogic bid for realism; they don't make them like that any more.

his followers - and specifically their conception of Man's relations with God - we must look to its leading motif, namely Eros. The force which binds Man to God is Man's love for God, a selfish appetite for an end perceived as good. Early Christianity signalled a "transvaluation" of the values of the "Eros-system": henceforth God's unselfish and undeserved love for Man, preceding even his creation, and hence the judgement that it was good, and evoking in him the pale reflection of God's Agape which is faith, is the dominant motif. Nygren traces the dialectic of Eros and Agape through a labyrinth of Parts, Chapters and Sections to its consummation in Luther's Copernican Revolution.

K.M.

#### Travel

CELIA FIENNES. *The Journeys of Celia Fienes*, with an introduction by John Hillaby. 430pp. Futura. £2.25. 0 7088 2069 7. □ John Hillaby displays an uncanny intimacy with Celia Fienes ("Celia" to him) in his introduction to this collection of her travels. But that past, there are the journals themselves, of the early travels in the South (c. 1685-96), the northern journey and the tour of Kent (1697), "My Great Journey to Newcastle and Cornwall" (1698) and the later journeys and visit to London. The book was "never designed, so not likely to fall into the hands of any but my near relations" and as a consequence it is unpolished almost to a fault. Yet its roughness is typical of its contingent pleasures - its sporadic descriptive accuracy, its wonderfully unself-regarding casualness in the face of hardship, its frustratingly selective and caustically Nonconformist eye for detail, and its highly valuable accounts of conditions and trades, and of places, like Colchester, which are no more.

A.J.G.H.

PERNA FLEMING. *One's Company*. 251pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 00 9509 8. □ Ex-Captain of Opplidans, twice disinherited, Peter Fleming bamboozled Printing House Square into defraying the cost of his second trip to China; it was only while he was there that his first book, *Brazilian Adventure*, made his name as a travel writer. Perhaps *One's Company* (first published in 1934 by Jonathan Cape and reviewed in the *TLS* of August 9 that year) was not the most obvious of his books to re-issue. Aficionados relish his dry and self-deprecating style, but here it is only the over-exquisiteness of his style which wins any humour from the relatively mundane scrapes he gets into, while on the serious moral and political issues at stake - the fate of Manchuria under Japanese rule, the future of Communism in China - his judgement is gravely at fault.

K.M.

MARK TWAIN. *A Tramp Abroad*. 428pp. Century. £5.95. 0 7126 0345 0. □ In March 1878 it occurred to Mark Twain that "it had been many years since the world had been afforded the spectacle of a man adventurous enough to undertake a journey through Europe on foot" and that he "was a person fitted to furnish to mankind this spectacle". *A Tramp Abroad*, published in 1880, records Twain's progress, in company with his companion Harlan, through the Black Forest, Switzerland and into Italy. Twain's reverence is as refreshing as ever (predictably here on Wagner's operas and German tenors) and there are sharply observed accounts of the scene and people of the journey. Including a notable description of the gory ritual of Heidelberg student duels. Less to contemporary taste may be the anecdotal digressions and over-elaborate leg-pulls, such as Twain's seven-day ascent from Zermatt to the Riffelberg with an expedition of "19 persons, including the mules or 205, including the cows". There is, however, a splendid anecdote of the mad King Ludwig II of Bavaria soaking a cast and stage in his Munich opera house from the overhead sprinklers is a demagogic bid for realism; they don't make them like that any more.

K.E.T.W.

## Town and Country

### I.

An siderdown ombrodered with  
A thousand sleeping lids;

An siderdown concrete-hued and sewn  
With a hundred thousand windows;

Her town sleep, her country sleep.

### II.

The flies as the fume of acid sunshine  
Consuming the world, fast, pecking it up,  
As the spiders tittle at the flies.

She entered - fascinating presence -  
Instantly there was an intuition of order.

I thought of the butterfly or soul  
Of man that wanders off when he is sick:  
Thus it returns.

### III.

The sky was brass-coloured.  
The traffic rang like trumpets.  
The heat wriggled over the slate roofs  
Like a plague of serpents.

### IV.

Under television serials like  
Elaborate can-openers, we sat  
By the awakening-tree.

The cherry that was waking up  
In the Spring sunshine, wooden construct  
Of a thousand sleeping lids  
Like the knots or eyes in wood  
Getting themselves soft lids  
So they could know awakening; lids despite

The brass-sounding air, the roar of cars.  
In the paddock, the violin-faced horse  
Trotted over, his nostrils music.

The muzzle of that wolf, the wind,  
Tattered the blossoms.

### III.

There was the almost-silent work,  
The spring of water, continuing  
Under the threshold of sleep.  
I thought of the little rivers  
Of ghosts there, of the spirits  
Who in nightmares rattled tambourines  
As if they were chains.

### IV.

Now we were drinking up our beer  
In a pavilion with green curtains blowing.  
The wind and rain worrying at the tent,  
Our clothes embroidered with eyes, some open  
And some closed, depicting the wind, the flowers.

Peter Redgrove